
Philippe Coutinho + Kolo Toure + Jon Flanagan + Liverpool Ladies + Aussie Reds + Retro kits + Luis Garcia
LIVERPOOLFC
official liverpool fc monthly magazine
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YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
21st Century
ANFIELD
Everything you need to know





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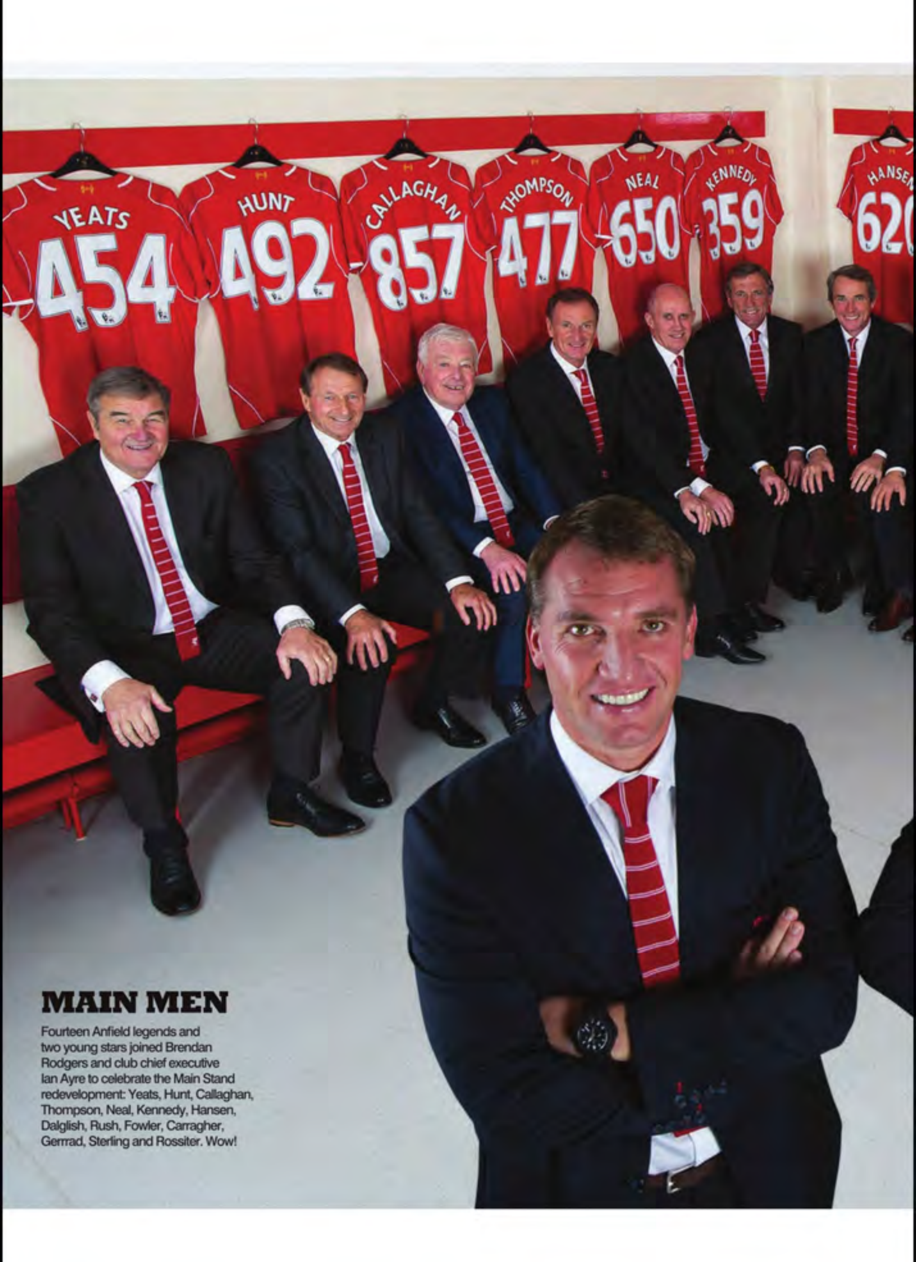
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MAIN MEN

Fourteen Anfield legends and two young stars joined Brendan Rodgers and club chief executive Ian Ayre to celebrate the Main Stand redevelopment: Yeats, Hunt, Callaghan, Thompson, Neal, Kennedy, Hansen, Dalglish, Rush, Fowler, Carragher, Gerrad, Sterling and Rossiter. Wow!


DALGLISH
515
RUSH
660
FOWLER
369
CARRAGHER
737
GERRARD
688
STERLING
97

1 GROUND FORCE

Work has started on the expansion of Anfield with foundations being laid for the superstructure forming part of a redeveloped main stand. Reds vice-captain Jordan Henderson reveals: "I've seen the plans and the designs look really good. The development is every bit as exciting for the players as the supporters – it's exciting for everybody connected with the club. I'm sure it will make Anfield even better than it is now, which is saying something. I'm certain it'll make for an incredible atmosphere once it's completed." There's more on pages 14 to 20.

"Anfield's changes are as exciting for the players as the fans"





2 YOUNG GUNS

Two Liverpool front men picked up individual awards. Raheem Sterling, sporting a smart new haircut, received the 2014 European Golden Boy accolade, while Divock Origi was named as Belgium's Promising Talent of the Year gong.

The European Golden Boy trophy is voted for by continental sports journalists and awarded each year to the young player considered to have performed to the highest level. Sterling, who turned 20 on 8 December, follows in the footsteps of Lionel Messi, Sergio Aguero and Reds team-mate Mario Balotelli in picking up the honour.

Divock signed for Liverpool in July before returning to Lille on a season-long loan as part of the agreement with the Ligue 1 outfit. The Talent was first awarded in 1998 when tennis star Kim Clijsters picked up the inaugural honour. It's voted for by Belgian sports writers and former winners.



3 POINTS CLEAR

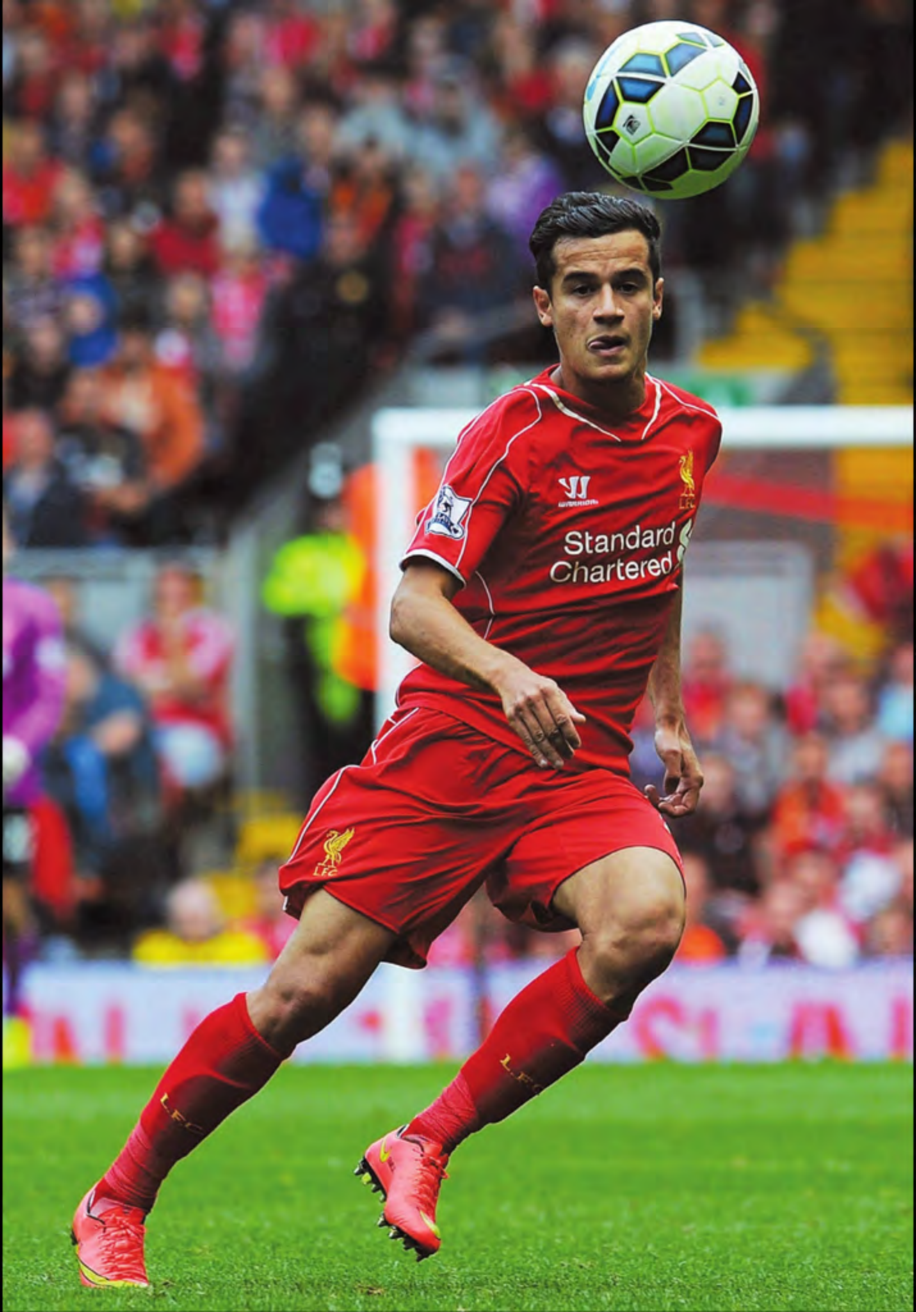
Exciting plans for the club's historic home; awards for two young stars here and abroad; and Istanbul the sequel…



3 RETURN TO ISTANBUL

The Reds will return to the Ataturk Stadium in Istanbul at the end of February – the draw for the last 32 of the UEFA Europa League pairing them with Besiktas, the club who are currently using the Istanbul venue while work on their new stadium is completed. The game will take place on Thursday 26 February, seven days after Slaven Bilic's team visit Anfield for the first leg.

Meanwhile LFC's youngsters will compete in the last 16 of the UEFA Youth League after a thrilling 30 win over FC Basel in their final group game. Neil Critchley's side now take on Portuguese side Benfica in Lisbon, also in February.


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STICK TOGETHER WORK HARD STAY POSITIVE

Through good times and bad, it's the football mantra that Reds midfielder Philippe Coutinho swears by – as he makes clear in a revealing interview

Can you describe how you feel about football?
I think it is the best thing in the world. I am a football fanatic. I love everything about it, both playing and watching. During my spare time I try to watch as many games as possible. Or if I'm on the internet I'll be looking at videos of players such as Ronaldinho and studying the way he played. He is one of my heroes. Kaka too.

Where does your love for the game come from?
In terms of watching or being interested, my father and brothers were football fans so that influenced me initially. I started out playing on the streets with my friends. Then one of my friend's grandmothers spoke to my dad and said he should put me into a good club where I could learn how to play the game properly. He listened to her advice. I played in a small football school before I went along to Vasco da Gama when I was seven.

Has the way you played the game changed as you've grown from a boy in Brazil to a man at Liverpool FC?
Definitely. When I was a kid at Vasco da Gama I didn't play with any responsibility. It was more about running around and enjoying myself. As a professional you just can't do that. it's very different to when you are a boy. You need to be aware of your role in the side at all times. It's not about what you want to do – it's about the team and your job in it. That has to be your focus because if it's not the team can suffer. I have learned that as I've got older.

Of all the kids you encountered while at Vasco da Gama did many of them go on to become professionals?
Not many did. It's not easy to make it as a professional footballer – there are a lot of obstacles to overcome. I think one or maybe two players who were at Vasco when I was there are still in the game now. That shows you how difficult it is to become a footballer. You certainly need a lot of support and thankfully I've had that from my family.

"I just love everything about football – playing it, watching it, learning"

Steven Gerrard has often mentioned how footballers need to continue improving – how do you do that?
I try to do all I can on the training pitch to get better every day. I'll watch DVDs of games and try to see where I did something wrong or could have made a better choice. I speak to the coaching staff and the manager too. Or I'll chat to my father or my wife about my game because advice from everyone can help.

What goes through your mind on the pitch – for example, if you are dribbling past opponents?
Nothing! At that very moment I'm not thinking about an awful lot, almost nothing. I'm trying to quickly assess the options and see if a team-mate is in a good position.

Disappointment is as much a part of sport as joy – how do you deal with the former?
I'm a positive person so that helps. Sometimes in football you are trying your best but it doesn't happen the way you want it to. To get through any bad spell in life or football you have to stick together and work hard. That is how you get to a better moment, so that's how I approach it.

How do you feel after a game?
It depends on the result! In general though I feel both physically and mentally tired. You are completely drained. But at the same time I'll go home and can't sleep for hours. I keep thinking about the game and what happened in it.

We often hear that you can learn more from a defeat than a victory – is that true?
Probably. Defeats are obviously analysed more because you want to see the reasons for the result or what went wrong. Then you can try to change something the next time you play. It's important to look closely at every game, no matter the result.

The mental side of modern football is often mentioned – what's your take on the subject?
As I said earlier, I'm a positive person anyway. I think that's my natural outlook. I always approach games in a positive way because I believe it's important if you want to be successful. At the club we have help with that side of the game. There are people we can




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speak to such as [club psychiatrist] Steve Peters. I've never spoken to him on a one-to-one basis but I've used some of his tips and suggestions he's given the squad.

You describe yourself as a football fanatic. So is it possible to switch off from the game?

I'm not sure. Even though I sometimes try to forget about football, it's always in the back of my mind because it's my passion. I think it's almost impossible to completely get away from it. Instead I try to relax by spending time with my wife, family and friends. We don't do anything too crazy, just hang out together, and go for food or maybe to the cinema.

January 2015 marks two years since you joined LFC - after playing in Brazil, Italy and Spain was it difficult to aclimatise to the Premier League?

I think English football is tough to adapt to. Physically it is very different to most other league and you need time to adjust to that. The intensity of the game is non-stop. You have less fouls than in other countries and it's never stop-start. It's dynamic, 100 per cent all the time. Playing at Christmas is very different too. But I love football so that's not a problem for me. Learning the language was another challenge. At the start I found it tough. But I am slowly getting there. I can hold conversations with people now and I'm always trying to learn more.

"Learning English was tough at first but I feel I can hold my own now"

Have you ever thought about life after football?

Not really. Hopefully I'll be playing for a long time. When I do finish [playing] I will probably go back to Brazil. It's my home and where a lot of my family and friends are. I don't think I will have a farm like Lucas. I'll go back to Rio – there aren't too many farms in the city!

Training in a tight corner with LFC team-mates

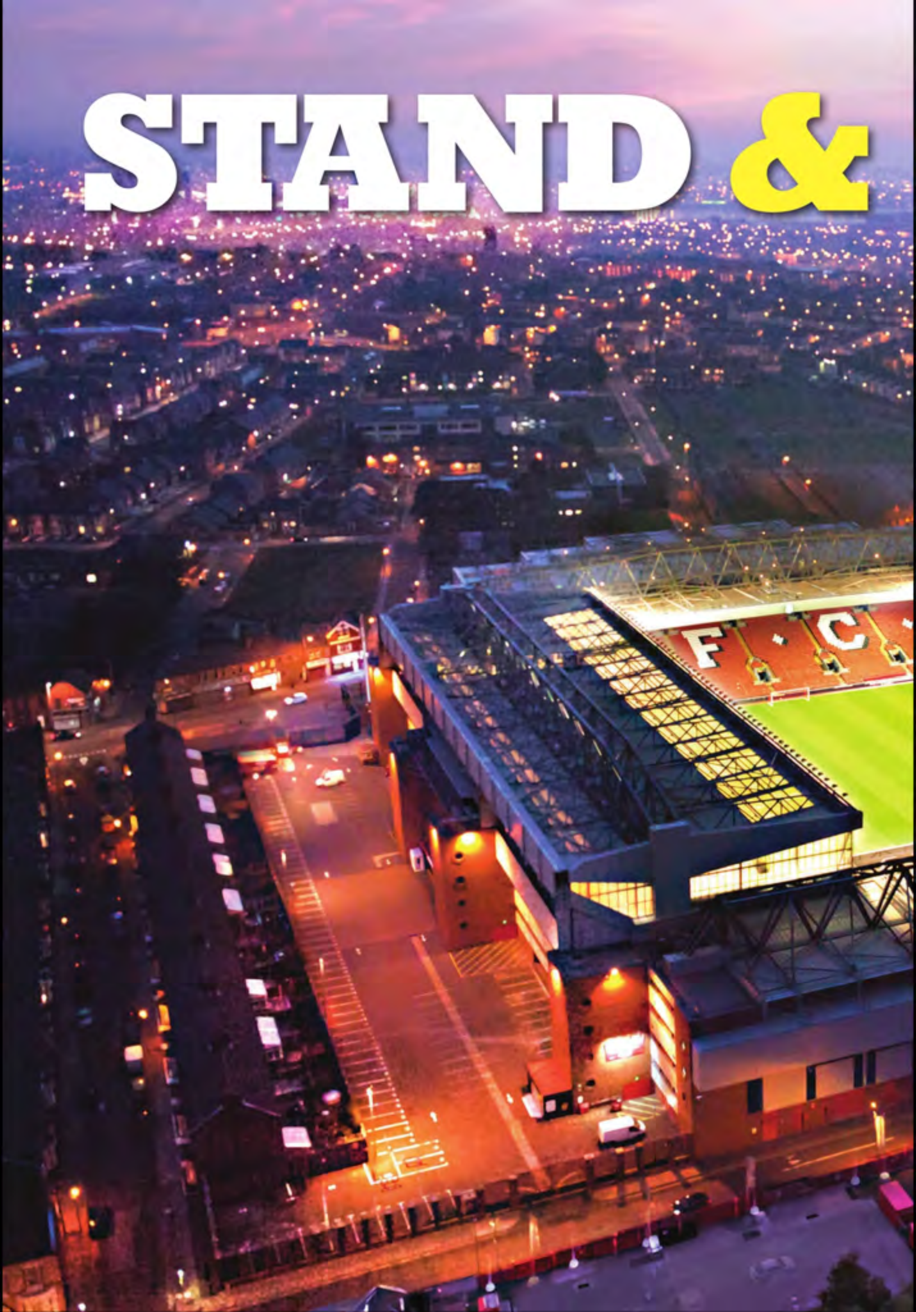
Bem feito!

That's 'well done!' in English – the reaction from Philippe's team-mates when he was called up by new Brazil boss Dunga for last September's friendlies against Colombia and Ecuador in Miami and New Jersey respectively. The Reds no10 was an unused sub in both matches but stayed in Dunga's squad and appeared in the 4-0 win over Turkey in Istanbul in November, replacing Chelsea's Oscar in the second half.

Fellow Brazilian midfielder Lucas and Liverpool skipper Steven Gerrard both took to Instagram to congratulate him. Lucas wrote: 'My brother, I know how much it means for you to have the chance to play for Brazil. Go there and show all your talent because you deserve all of this'. Steven posted handclap and thumbs-up emoticons and put: 'Well deserved call up for our little magician – well done mate!'



STAND &



DELIVER

How 21st century Anfield will combine tradition with cutting-edge technology to keep its atmosphere

The next two seasons will be as busy off the pitch as on it as Liverpool Football Club fulfils its ambition to redevelop Anfield – a stadium rich in history, atmosphere and memories.

Work has begun on the expansion of the Main Stand, providing an additional 8,500 seats and taking the overall stadium capacity to around 54,000. It will be completed during season 2016/17. The expanded stand will comprise three tiers with the existing lower level re-profiled to accommodate a widened player tunnel, new team benches, media platform and wheelchair positions.

There will also be a podium for the Hillsborough Memorial and a new home for the Shankly Gates, as well as wider connections to Stanley Park and a new space for fans to gather, enhancing the matchday and non-matchday experience for visitors. Matches will continue to be played at Anfield during construction.

Featuring the famous club crest, the Main Stand will be a new addition to the city of Liverpool's skyline. The expansion is one element of Liverpool City Council's regeneration plan to transform the Anfield area as a better place to live, work and visit, with the club committed to working with the Council and Your Housing Group.



DAVID FAIRCLOUGH FORMER LIVERPOOL PLAYER

I spent the first 13 years of my life living about 100 yards away from Anfield stadium. Our family home was on Carmel Street, between Beacon Lane and St Domingo Road. The street is no longer there – when the area was being redeveloped in about 1970 Carmel Street became part of another road and we moved to Cantril Farm.

It was a great childhood and I have so many fond memories of the area. We would hang about outside [former winger] Peter Thompson's garage – the site across the road from where the 12th Man pub is now – waiting to see him or some of the other players. But it was the stadium that was the biggest part of my life. I was only about six or seven when my dad – a season-ticket holder – started taking me to reserve-team games.

Because the ground would be far from full I'd wander about with other kids. We'd go exploring the Main Stand or run up the steps of the Kop, which felt like climbing a mountain. I have vivid recollections of walking all around the pitch and eventually ending up stood under the massive floodlight tower in the Annie Road end.

Looking back, the stadium was fairly basic but that didn't matter. To us it meant absolutely everything. It really was the centre of my childhood.

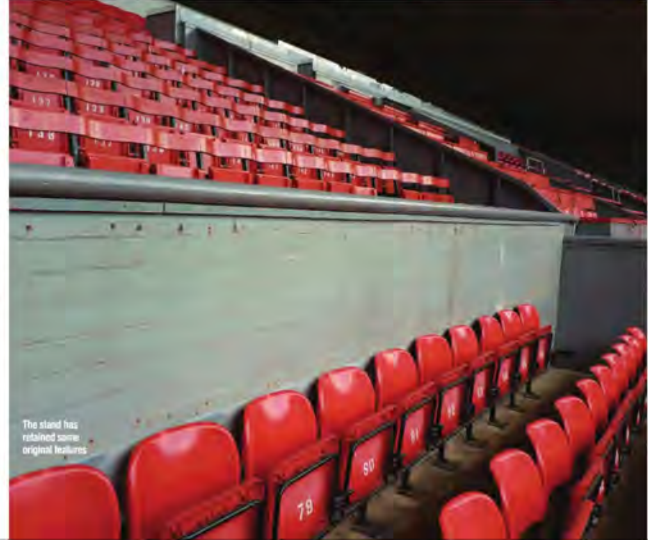
As a fan I've had some amazing times there: getting in with a few minutes to go on the day a 5-0 win over Arsenal sealed the league title in 1964; the following season when we beat Reykjavik 6-1; on the Kop to see [Leeds goalkeeper] Gary Sprake throw the ball in to his own net; also when we came from two goals down to defeat Everton 3-2 in 1970. Two seasons later we clinched the title with a win over Leeds and I looked on from the Main Stand. I could go on forever…

The point is: Anfield means so much to me as a fan that I would have been devastated if we'd moved to another ground, no matter how impressive it might have looked or what the increased capacity was.

Once I started playing in the first

The Main Stand upgrade of 1973





The stand has retained some original features

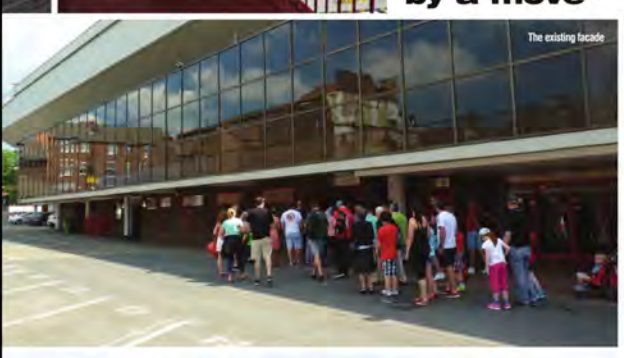




team my love for the place was cemented. It is special, unique, even on non-matchdays. More than once I've encountered supporters from Europe who were in the UK to play someone else and made the journey to Anfield because they wanted to see the stadium. Now it's going to be even better when the new stand is complete.

I think a big part of any football club is the local community. For me – as someone who hails from Anfield – it's crucial that the redevelopment will go hand in hand with regeneration. Then everybody wins and surely that's the best result for the club, the people and the area.

"Anfield means so much to me – I would have been devastated by a move"



The existing facade



Behind the stand where the new structure will be built

Questions & answers

How will it happen given the very busy football calendar?

The expanded Main Stand and roof will be built behind and over the existing structure so that the seats in the Main Stand can continue to be used throughout the seasons. In the final close-season the existing roof will be demolished and the connections made between old and new.

How many additional tickets will be available?

At this stage it is too early to provide an exact breakdown of seating/ticketing allocations. But we anticipate that half of the additional tickets will be hospitality and the remainder split between general admission and season-tickets. Further details will be available in 2015.

I am on the season-ticket waiting list - will I get a Main Stand seat?

The new season-tickets will be sold to the current waiting list in numerical order – those who have been on the list the longest come first. The club expects to be in a position to contact those eligible during 2015.

What will be done to retain the atmosphere in the Main Stand?

Retaining the unique atmosphere has been a key consideration throughout the process. The new roof will direct the noise from Liverpool fans downwards and onto the pitch.

Will existing Main Stand season-ticket holders be affected by the construction work?

The club does not expect any seat disruption in 2014/15; however we are committed to ensuring that our fans are kept fully informed, and will ensure that all season-ticket holders are advised ahead of renewal for 2015/16 regarding any changes impacting upon their seat. It is too early to establish the full implications that the build phase will have on each individual seat next season; but we are in the process of working through these details with a view to contacting season-ticket holders when information is available.



STEVE HOTHERSALL RADIO CITY COMMENTATOR

Maybe other journalists might think differently, but from a commentary position in the broadcast media the most important feature of a football stadium's press box is the view of the pitch.

There are some grounds like Sunderland or Hull City where you are too high, almost detached from the game. Then there are other grounds – like Tottenham Hotspur – where you are right behind the dugout and find it difficult seeing everything that happens through a crowd of players charging about.

I've been to all the Barclays Premier League grounds and Anfield is my favourite, not just because of the emotional attachment but because it is a venue that makes it easy to deliver accurate commentary.

Anfield's press facilities were similar to Highbury's before Arsenal moved to the Emirates. Highbury was cramped but what it lacked in space, it made up for in atmosphere.

When I think about Highbury and the Emirates, in the nicest possible sense it's like comparing an intimate B&B you stayed in as a child to a lavish hotel where the service is fantastic.

Highbury was old-fashioned, with marble floors, rickety wooden seats and dodgy tables. Yet it had charisma and charm in abundance. Arsenal have swapped that for something very modern. There is so much space for all types of media. It really is a remarkable facility.

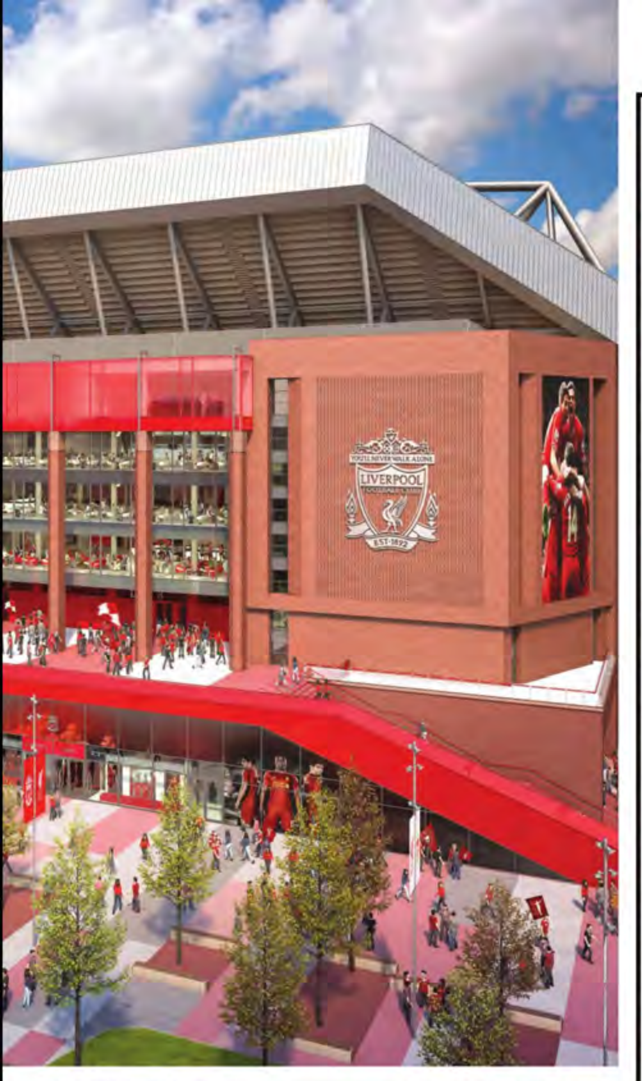
Liverpool's situation is different to Arsenal's in that Anfield will remain. It is a case of expanding and modernising. The internal structure of the Main Stand hasn't changed much since the days of the Boot Room and one of the big challenges for the designers will be to retain some of the historical value of the surroundings.

The tightness of the tunnel is an example of that, and, of course, the famous This Is Anfield sign – symbols of Anfield which help create the club's aura and continue to act as an advantage for the home team.

My one big hope at Anfield is that the view from the press box remains as brilliant as it is.

When I first started working for Radio City 15 years ago one of Liverpool's senior officials, a person no longer with the club, made a complaint about me for making too much noise from my commentary position. I'd replaced the legendary

"Of all the Premier League grounds Anfield is my favourite"



local commentator Graham Beecroft and soon after I received a request to stop shouting my way through football matches.

I was a young buck reporter, learning my trade and keen to make an impression. Even though I can laugh about it now, it caused a few sleepless nights at the time. I was working with Ian St John and typical of the Saint, he just told me in his straightforward manner to forget all about the complainant.

The truth is: I was probably just a bit excited about working at Anfield, a stadium where the press seats are situated perfectly, virtually on the halfway line, at a great height and, of course – from a news point of view – close to the directors box.

Questions & answers

Are there plans to improve public transport links?

The club will aim to reduce the number of cars used by people travelling to and from the stadium, to help minimise the impact of matchday traffic on Anfield's residents. All major car-parks within close proximity of the ground will be managed by the club on matchdays, ensuring that only those with a pre-booked parking pass can access the stadium/surrounding area by car. We will also actively encourage the use of public transport by supporters, providing designated drop-off and pick-up points for matchday buses and taxis.

What plans are in place to improve accessibility in and around the stadium?

The club is committed to meeting accessible stadia guidelines. Following consultation with the LDSA and Supporters Committee it is expected that there will be additional wheelchair positions, amenity seats and new elevated seats within the expanded Main Stand, while new and improved disabled parking and drop-off facilities will be provided in close proximity to the stadium.

I am a hospitality member – will it affect my current seat/ lounge at Anfield?

We are undertaking the expansion with a view to minimising disruption. It is possible that some seats/ lounges will be affected during the build phase and we will be in regular contact with hospitality members during the works.

Will local people be employed on the project?

As part of our agreement with our construction partner Carillion, employment and training opportunities created as a result of the expansion will focus on local people. Candidates in the Anfield area will be a priority, followed by residents in neighbouring wards and the wider Liverpool city region.

"I'm delighted that Anfield will keep its distinctive, intimate feel"



SIMON INGLIS SPORTS AUTHOR AND HISTORIAN

What Liverpool Football Club have gone for is a tried and tested formula – building a new stand behind an existing one then linking them.

It's an eminently sensible way to go, in my view a better solution than moving to Stanley Park.

The world has moved on so much since the 1990s in terms of Premier League finances and the broader economy. As most fans will be aware, it's a massive challenge to keep up with the likes of Manchester City and Chelsea – I'm an Aston Villa fan so I speak from the heart – and stadium functionality plays a big part in that effort. But not just capacity, which in the old days was usually enough. Nowadays stadiums must also bring in revenue all year round. They need a larger footprint too. Have you noticed how much space is taken up by TV trucks?

Equally important is the role that stadiums are now expected to play in local affairs. It's no longer enough for a club to put up the shutters after the final whistle and expect the neighbours to be grateful for its existence. Stadiums have to look out as well as in.

So given all the issues surrounding Anfield over the last 20 years – issues that are not unique (Spurs are going through an equally challenging process) – I see this new development as a real opportunity to shape the future for all parties concerned in the Anfield area.

I'm delighted that the club are going for a traditional four-sided ground, keeping that distinctive, intimate element of Anfield, and that the architectural treatment of the new Main Stand will blend in with what's gone before – giving it a unity that perhaps might have been lacking before. To a certain extent they are adopting a Fenway Park approach, not just because it conforms to the style of the club but also because it sits better with the character of the area.

For me, the measure of the redevelopment's success will not only be how good a football experience it delivers – that should be a given with good design – but how it helps to transform the area around it, and thereby the perception of the football club as a positive presence.

In that respect one of the scheme's most exciting elements is the opening-up of the area behind the stand.

A good example of what can be achieved is Arsenal's Emirates Stadium, where far from blocking off existing streets the stadium has actually opened up thoroughfares which didn't exist before – creating new routes and new life, so to speak. You can walk past or around the Emirates any day of the week and feel the energy. Seeing people coming and going, there's a real 'buzz'.

I'm a great fan of public parks too, and in this instance the city of Liverpool has a fantastic asset in Stanley Park, which I hope will now be opened up more for people on the Walton Breck Road side of the stadium.

And finally the whole notion of continuity: why start from scratch when you've got such a powerful asset in terms of heritage and international renown? You could describe it as a retro revival – a good old-fashioned, brand new redevelopment!

Simon Inglis is the editor of the English Heritage series, Played in Britain. You can read about his latest title at www.playedinbritain.co.uk.





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How it will work

Step by step: the existing stand and a new superstructure become one over the coming months



Foundations are installed to hold up the steel frame for the expanded stand; the superstructure will be built behind the existing stand, including the concrete floors and terracing.

The main truss which will carry the new roof will also be assembled at the back of the existing stand; the main truss will then be lifted into position by two large cranes.

With the existing two-storey building at the back of the Main Stand demolished, the new roof will be assembled on the ground and lifted into place by the two cranes.

The 'envelope' will be installed from the ground level, and the new two-level podium will be built; this will provide new access into the Main Stand.

The roof and envelope of the stand is now wind and weather-tight, and work starts internally; the new and existing structures are connected to form one building.

Starting over

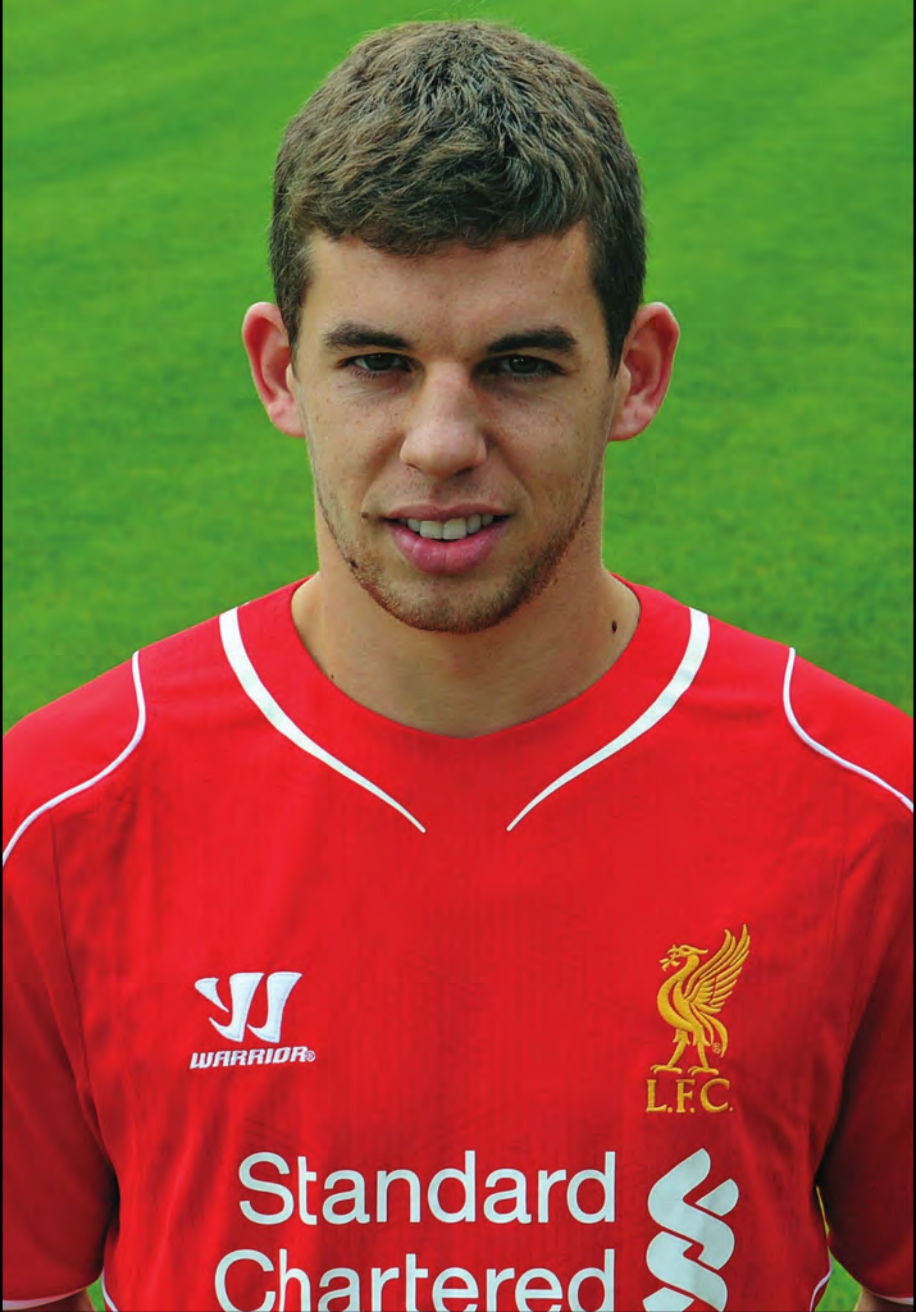
He's endured a few frustrating months as he recovers from injury, and now Jon Flanagan is keen to make for lost time, writes John Hynes

"What's happened to young Flanagan?" asks the talkative taxi driver bringing us to Melwood. Maybe it's a sign of how well the defender – who turns 22 this month but is one of those people who will probably always be referred to as 'young' – did during the 25 appearances in 2013/14 that supporters have been bemoaning his absence this season.

Half-an-hour later we are sat inside the training ground where we put this theory to the Scouse full-back, who has just arrived with a smile and a friendly handshake. Initially he is a little surprised. After carefully considering the idea he then decides: "It's great to hear that the fans haven't forgotten me. When you hear that, you know people are rooting for you and want to see you back playing again. It gives me even more motivation to recover and get back out on the pitch as soon as possible."

After debuting under Kenny Dalglish during a 3-0 win over Man City in April 2011 – "it doesn't get any better" – the two seasons that followed saw Flanagan play on 10 occasions. That's why 2013/14 was really his breakthrough campaign.

"A few fans probably didn't think I'd be up to scratch when Brendan Rodgers put me in last season, or


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when he kept me in the team for a run of games. Hopefully my performances changed some minds and proved anyone who might have doubted me wrong."

That was certainly the case as 'Flano' won acclaim from all quarters. His team-mates gave him a round of applause in the dressing-room after his performance in the 3-3 derby game at Goodison Park. While those on the terraces dubbed him the 'Scouse Cafu' – comparisons that led to him eventually coming face to face with the Brazilian legend when the 2002 World Cup-winning captain visited Merseyside to watch the Reds in action.

There was also Flanagan's first goal at senior level as he rammed a fine half-volley in to the roof of Hugo Lloris' net during a memorable 5-0 win over Spurs at White Hart Lane.

"Defending is always my first priority, it has to be. But I like getting forward too. That [goal at Spurs] was a brilliant moment for me. People probably won't believe it but I scored a lot of goals for Country Park [Jon's junior side] when I was a kid."

"It's great to hear people are rooting for me to get back playing"

While there were plenty of experiences for him to cherish on the way to the team finishing runners-up in the Premier League, including a senior England debut in a friendly against Ecuador in June, Flanagan is mature enough to realise that it all counts for little now.

A knee injury and subsequent operation to cure the problem has led to him being unavailable since a pre-season game at Preston back in July. So when he does return to action, hopefully in the near future, it will be like starting over.

"I've got in the team before and kept my place. Now I need to do that again. All going well, I could be back playing in January. I've been out for what has felt like a really long time.

"It's been very frustrating. When the rest of the lads have been travelling to away games I've been in having treatment or doing rehab work. That is one of the downsides of football that people don't see. You're out of routine because you are used to training and playing, being around the squad and having a laugh on a daily basis.

"Once you are injured your schedule changes completely.



Celebrating his belter at Spurs last season

"When we signed two full-backs I thought: I need to up my game now"

You have to rest on different days and work on other areas – it's not nice but it has to be done and will be worth all the effort in the end."

While he's been unavailable Jon has been closely looking on from the sidelines. Long before he ever broke in to the first team he was a regular in the crowd at both home and away fixtures, travelling as far afield as Barcelona and Athens during LFC's run to the Champions League final in 2007.

Naturally he has noticed the progress of Alberto Moreno and Javier Manquillo, the full-backs who arrived during the summer. Although adept on either side of the pitch he is well aware that the Spaniards' presence offers even more competition for places in the starting XI.

"A club as big as this will always buy new players. That's part of football and you have to deal with it. I know Carra had similar experiences when he was young too: Gerard Houllier brought in players and people then suggested he might not get in the side. He proved everyone wrong by working hard and keeping his place.

"When I saw that we signed two full-backs I immediately thought: I need to up my game now. I know I need to consistently do well if I'm to get in the team and then stay there. I want to keep developing as a footballer. That's why not being available has been so frustrating.

"But competition for places doesn't bother me. I'm always up for the fight."

England debutant v Ecuador last June

5 best Flano moments



City slicker
Making his debut aged 18 under then-boss Kenny Dalglish at home to Manchester City in April 2011, the Reds winning 3-0.

Derby display
Earning a round of applause from his team-mates after a fine performance at Goodison in a 3-3 draw of November 2013.

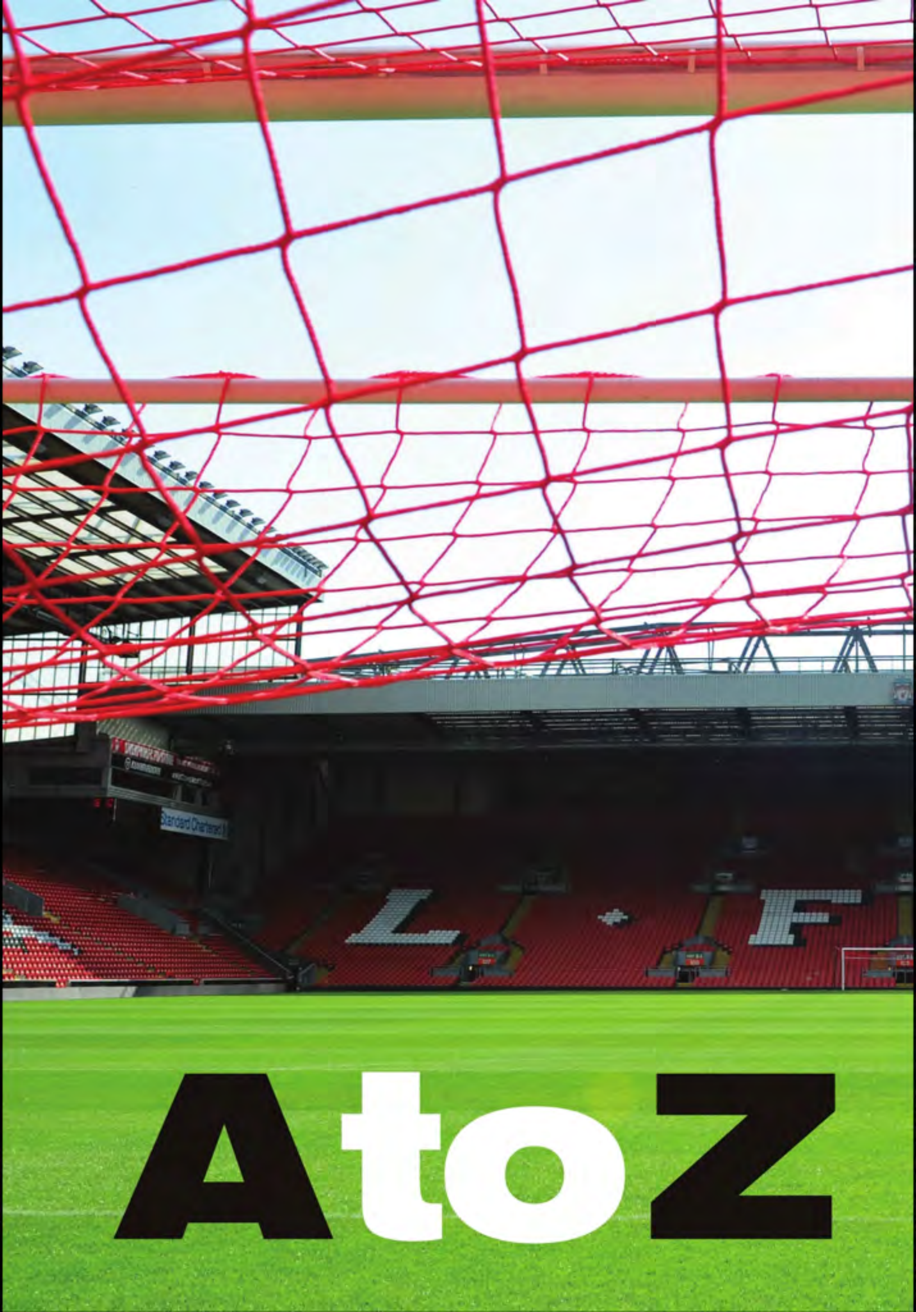
White Hot Lane
Thumping home his first-ever senior goal – and Liverpool's third on the day – in the 5-0 win at Spurs in December 2013.

England man
Winning his first senior cap as a second-half replacement for Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain in a friendly v Ecuador in the US in June.

Cafu mate
Meeting the Brazilian legend before last May's season-finale Newcastle game after comparisons had been drawn between the two defenders.




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of Anfield

Another instalment of our encyclopaedic series about Liverpool Football Club's hallowed home, covering everything from the King Harry to Queen Liz…

PART 4


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LFC



is for **NETS** – invented for the game of football in 1889 by a Liverpool civil engineer, John Brodie, who also designed the first Mersey road tunnel in 1934.

At Anfield the nets have been back to their original red colour since the start of season 2012/13 when new boss Brendan Rodgers requested them during a private tour of the stadium.

Red goalnets had been used at Anfield since at least 1968 until 1995. Club museum curator Stephen Done reveals: "Some of Roy Evans' players claimed they could not see the red-netted goal against the backdrop of the Kop, so the nets were duly changed. The players might have had a point, but it never seemed to be a problem for the likes of Ian Rush, John Barnes and John Aldridge – let alone Roger Hunt!

"Brendan and his family were given their first glimpse of Anfield the day after he was unveiled as manager in the summer of 2012. At the end of the tour we stood on the Kop and Brendan commented that he always remembered the goals at Anfield having red nets. He suggested that we bring them back."

The first player to score in them upon their return? Fabio Borini, against FC Gomel in the second leg of a third qualifying round of the UEFA Europa League, on Thursday 9 August 2012.

And for **NEIGHBOURS** – Anfield was of course home to Everton FC from 1884 to 1891 until that famous dispute over rent.

Goodison Park is only 0.59 miles away, and the two stadiums were literally linked following the Hillsborough tragedy. Two local taxi drivers proposed a chain of Everton and Liverpool scarves to link the two clubs and pay tribute to the victims. Their initial estimate of 2,500 scarves turned out to be 1,500 short, but an appeal went out to supporters and a special 'scarfmobile' toured Merseyside to collect them.

The first scarf was tied to the gates of Goodison by Everton player Ian Snodin and the chain continued out of Bullens Road, over Walton Road, across Stanley Park and through the Shankly Gates at Anfield to the Kop. On Saturday 22 April 1989 a ceremony led by Archbishop Derek Worlock and



"The two stadiums were literally linked back in 1989"

Bishop David Sheppard was held at Anfield for the tying of the final scarf to the Kop.

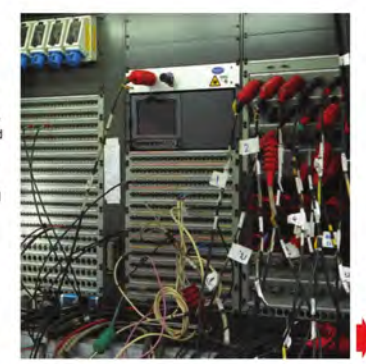
Football historian Peter Lupson, author of *Across The Park*, a book that celebrates the links between the clubs, says: "That physical link between the two stadia represented an emotional bond that has always existed between the two clubs. Following the death of young Everton fan Rhys Jones in 2007, Liverpool gave something back in kind in a similarly dark hour for Evertonians, with Z-Cars being played at Anfield before a game."

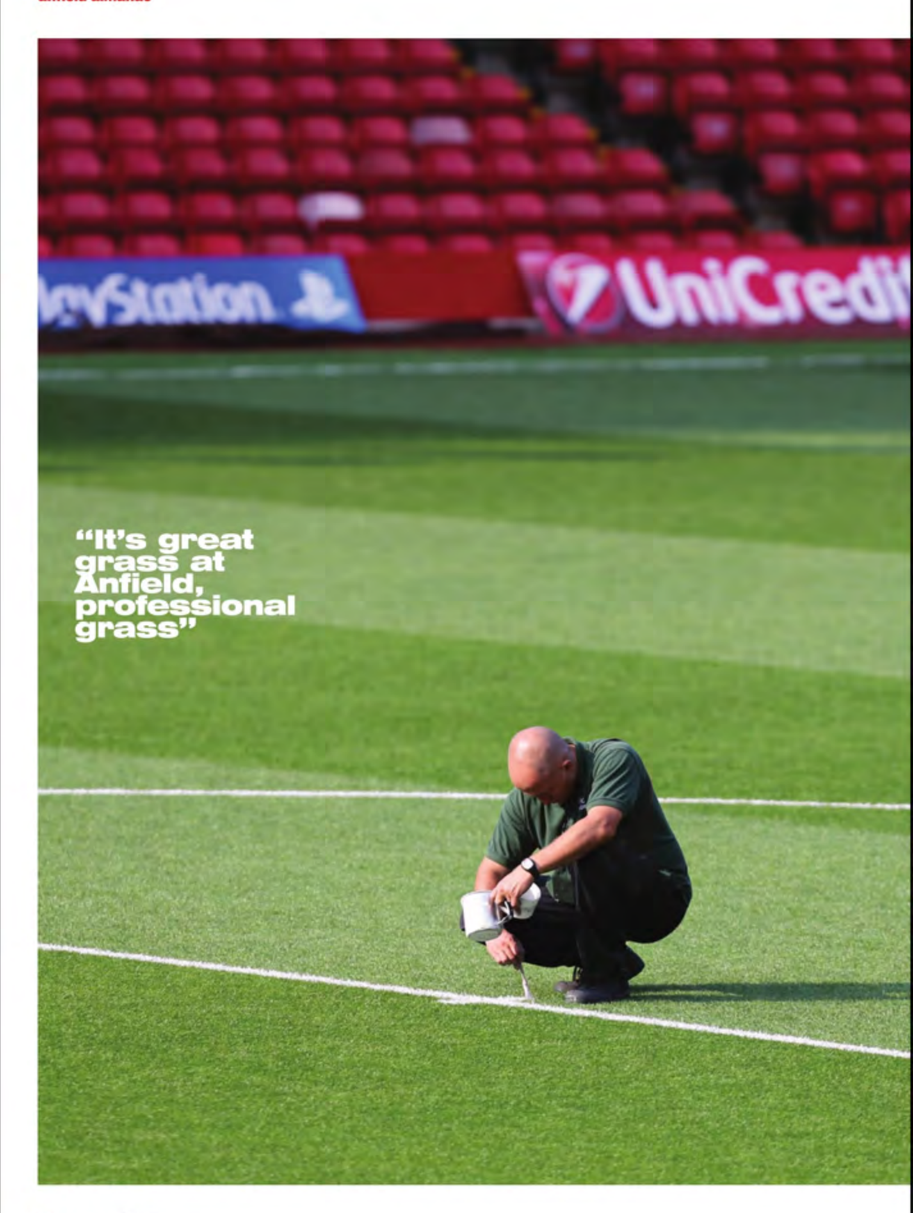


is for **OUTSIDE BROADCAST** – the show *Match of the Day* began on BBC2 in August 1964 with the first OB coming from Anfield or 'Beatleville' as commentator Kenneth Wolstenholme called it at the time. On the day Liverpool beat Arsenal 3-2, with Roger Hunt scoring the first-ever goal to be shown on the programme.

A few years ago Wolstenholme told LFCTV's Mark Platt: "I'd been doing commentaries for a number of years before *Match of the Day* began, but it always makes you nervous starting a new programme. I was wondering how well it would go. There were more people at Anfield than actually watched the game on television. This was because at that time BBC2 could only be received in London. This probably pleased the two clubs and the Football League because they had worried about what effect *Match of the Day* would have on attendances, so that first game was really an experiment.

"When it switched to BBC1 it really took off. At one time we were pulling in 15 million viewers. The publicans apparently weren't too pleased because everyone went home early from the pub to watch the highlights!"





"It's great grass at Anfield, professional grass"



is for **PITCH** – its exact dimensions are 110 yards x 75 yards. For the record, that's the same length as the pitch at neighbouring Goodison Park but one yard wider, and a full six yards shorter and three narrower than the playing surface at Manchester City's Etihad Stadium. "It's great grass at Liverpool," said the legendary Bill Shankly, "professional grass." We're inclined to agree.



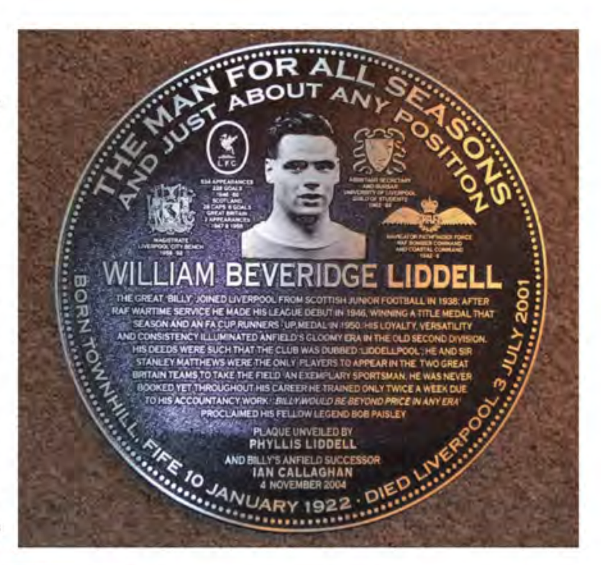
And for **PUBS** – The 12th Man, The Albert, The Park, The King Harry Hotel, The Oakfield, The Flat Iron, The Cabbage Hall, The Stanley, The Breck… Anfield has always had a wealth of charismatic public houses – most still thriving, a few sadly closed, and virtually all built in the second half of the 19th century – and their presence helps explain the history and development of the neighbourhood's landscape.

The 12th Man was originally called The Salisbury – the same title as another pub slightly further away from the stadium. Both were named after one Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury and Conservative Prime Minister for three terms between 1885 and 1902, whose family owned a series of fields stretching from Walton Breck Road to Breckfield Road North.

Many of the pubs were built on street corners so they could have multiple entrances, and the more fancy-looking on the outside, the more tempting on the inside, or so the theory went.

And for **PLAQUES** – the stadium at Anfield is home to several, some a little easier to spot than others. Ten years ago in 2004 one was unveiled to the memory of the great Reds striker Billy Liddell, inside the Spion Kop by the entrance to the club museum. Six years later former Liverpool full-back Phil Neal and ex-Juventus player Sergio Brio unveiled a permanent tribute to the 39 football fans who died at Heysel in 1985. The plaque is situated on the outside of the Centenary Stand.

And for **PROGRAMME** – currently entitled *This Is Anfield* and part of the matchday experience for thousands upon thousands of supporters, an official Liverpool FC programme has been published since the club's first fixture against Rotherham on 1 September 1892, while between 1904 and 1935 one edition was produced jointly by Liverpool and Everton. Today the collection of the rarest Liverpool programmes – home and away – has become an addictive and fiercely-competitive pursuit. Fans can purchase programmes for season 2014/15 inside Anfield and at the club's offiial stores on non-matchdays.



And for **PANORAMA** – the BBC documentary show visited Anfield in April 1964. Liverpool were about to clinch the First Division title, and a reporter stood before a packed Spion Kop and said…

"It used to be thought that Welsh international rugby crowds were the most musical and passionate in the world, but I've never seen anything like this Liverpool crowd. On the field here the gay and inventive ferocity they show is quite stunning. The Duke of Wellington before the battle of Waterloo said of his own troops, 'I don't know what they do to the enemy but by God they frighten me'. And I'm sure some of the players in this match must be feeling the same way…

[Presenter looks behind him at the Kop singing Cilla's *Anyone Who Had A Heart*].

"An anthropologist studying the Kop would be introduced to as rich and mystifying a popular culture as any South Sea island. Their rhythmic swaying is an elaborate and organised ritual. The 28,000 people on the Kop itself begin singing together. They seem to know intuitively when to begin. Throughout the match they invent new words, usually within the framework of old Liverpool songs, to express adulatory, cruel or bawdy comments about the players or the police. But even then they begin singing these new words with one immediate, huge voice. They seem, mysteriously, to be in touch with one another, with Wacker, the spirit of Scouse."













is for **QUEEN** – Anfield has hosted plenty of footballing royalty over the past 132 years but it's also welcomed the reigning monarch. HRH Queen Elizabeth II has made two trips, her most recent being in May 1993 when she toured the ground and stopped at the Hillsborough memorial. The first royal visitors to Anfield were King George V and Queen Mary, who attended the 1921 FA Cup semi-final between Wolverhampton Wanderers and Aston Villa.

"The Queen has made two trips, the most recent in May 1993"







is for **RAP** – the Anfield one, recorded ahead of the 1988 FA Cup final against Wimbledon and co-written by Reds midfielder Craig Johnston and rapper Derek Boland, it reached no3 in the UK singles chart. Sample lyric [from John Aldridge and Steve McMahon]: 'Alright Aldo, Sound as a pound, I'm cushty la but there's nothing down, The rest of the lads ain't got it sussed, We'll have to learn 'em to talk like us!'

And for **ROCK** – from the old standing Spion Kop itself. When the terrace was demolished in 1994 to make way for the new all-seater grandstand, Liverpool Football Club teamed up with the Royal Liverpool University Hospital Cancer Appeal and produced limited-edition pieces of Kop Rock to raise funds. They came complete with authenticity certificates issued by then club chairman David Moores.

FROM BARCA WITH JOY

In this exclusive book extract, Luis Garcia recalls his love for LFC with Leo Moynihan

There really is nothing like it. If you're near it, you can hear it. Swoooosh! If you aren't you can see it; a bulge, like a fisherman landing the most prized of salmon. The ball has hit the net. It's what the people are there for.

Some cultures advocate dream catchers. Nets they hang over their beds so that while they sleep, dreams will be dreams, and not nightmares. Football fans have nets too and when the ball hits them; well then dreams and nightmares are made.

For Liverpool fans, with Luis Garcia around, the ball and the net were joined in matrimony on plenty of occasions, lifting their dreams to new heights, especially in 2005, on the way to that most amazing of nights in Istanbul. But, the Spaniard's most famous moment – the one the grandchildren of fans there will be hearing about – was a goal, a wonderful life-changing goal, but the net, well the net had no part to play in it.

For Liverpool and their supporters, that goal against Chelsea in the Champions League semi-final second leg ushered in a dream they hadn't dare to dream; another final in Europe's premier competition. For Chelsea and their nouveau-riche status, it was a nightmare. Their manager, Jose Mourinho refused to comprehend it. He would rather talk of the spirit world. That seemed easier to believe in. The ghost goal. Haunting whether you wore red, or you wore blue.

For those in the former, it is still just that, a goal and a time that still haunts them. Beautifully. Luis Garcia nicks in, in front of John Terry, flicks the ball with his left foot toward goal and it hangs over the goal line before William Gallas kicks it away from his net, hoping to have saved the day. He hasn't. The referee's assistant has seen enough. The referee has seen enough. 1–0

"Mourinho drilled them with a game plan but we upset it with my goal"

Liverpool. Garcia is under his team-mates whilst the stadium rocks to its wonderful foundations…

"It was such an amazing evening," says Garcia. "To score against Chelsea so early was key. They were a great team but very tactical. Mourinho would have drilled them all with a game plan, but we upset that with my goal and suddenly everything was very different.

"We were so up for it. When we played Chelsea we always wanted to press them like crazy. Really get into them and stop them getting that rhythm going. I must say, it was so much easier to press them that night because of the noise our fans made. I'm sure it affected Chelsea's players but with that noise behind us; well I know it helped me when it came to working off the ball"…

Luis Garcia had arrived from Barcelona for £6 million in the summer of 2004. The club had gone Spanish with Rafa Benitez investing in Xabi Alonso, Garcia, Josemi and Antonio Nunez. Garcia had scored some goals. "Vamos!" he would usually shout in his mother tongue. Now in early May, with a Scouse volcano erupting around his goal against Chelsea, he ran to



those fans and he once again shouted; "Come on," he screamed. He was one of them.

"I worked with Rafa at Tenerife and he tried to sign me again when he was working at Valencia," recalls Garcia. "As soon as Rafa got the job at Liverpool he called me. I was at Barcelona and enjoying it there. My family were settled but when he called me and said, 'Hi Luis, how are you?' I knew what was coming. He said he was building a new, stronger team, a team that he wanted to be strong in Europe over the coming years and that he'd like me to sign"…

Let's not gloss over this though. For all of Garcia's boyish charm and memory-making goals, things were not always easy. Fans could be as frustrated with the impish Spaniard as they were delighted. Liverpool finished fifth the season they won the Champions League.

Jamie Carragher certainly wasn't sure at times. "Garcia sometimes couldn't cope with the demands of English football," he said. "His contribution would sum up Benitez's first season: fantastic in Europe, but infuriatingly inconsistent in the league.

"Luis and I had a love-hate relationship on the park, just like he had with the fans. I'd always be shouting at him for losing the ball with one of his backheels or flicks, but then he'd volley one in from 30 yards [as he did against Juventus] and it was like all the indiscretions of the previous eight months could be forgiven. When I think of him now, I remember a player who contributed as much as any to winning my Champions League medal"…

"It's true, I did find the Premier League hard; especially that first season," says Garcia. "I heard that Rio Ferdinand was supposed to have come in and kicked me in the back of my ankles in one of my early games. He then was supposed to have said, "Welcome to the Premier League." That isn't true. He didn't say anything.

Back at Anfield for the Celebration of the 96 benefit match last year







Signing in with Rafa and Xabi in August 2004

"It was so physical, so fast, and you have to be very, very strong. I wasn't that type of player. I was quick, I liked to move around people, get the ball, give the ball. Maybe I wasn't used to the fight that is sometimes required. I was light too. Only 67kg. I got in the gym to bulk up enough. It didn't work! Some of these defenders weighed 20kg more than me. I tried to find solutions, tried to be cleverer with the ball so that I could balance out those weight and strength issues"…

Carragher, the manager, fans; you couldn't stay angry at Garcia for long. He had this way about him. The thumb-sucking goal celebration was one thing – a strange childlike add-on – but he came to Liverpool and immersed himself in the place. He hardly spoke English on arrival, but got the hang of it quickly. He strolled around town, smiling at those who recognised him in his civvies.

Maybe it was his Catalonian background that made him get his new home, a place eager to stand out and be different from the country in which it exists. He liked to play guitar, something in the city of Liverpool every bit as noteworthy as kicking a football.

"Ferdinand kicking me and saying welcome to the Premier League? Not true"

Garcia would walk into guitar shops. "I play English stuff," he says. "Not Spanish. I like to play things like Lenny Kravitz and when I was in Liverpool I really got into The Killers. In the city, music is nearly as big as the football and I learnt a few Beatles songs on my guitar. I was in charge of the music in the dressing-room and my choices were always popular." Always? "Well unless Carra walked in, then he would moan. Carra was always complaining. I saw him recently and told him he was always angry, always moaning!"

Garcia was endearing. He turned up to the Christmas party in 2005, dressed as a pimp. Hat, cane, the lot. It worked. He was, after all, Benitez's extravagance. Pick Garcia. Pimp My Team…

While writing this book, plenty of people would suggest who must be in it, their cult hero. Eyebrows were raised at some of course. Universally though, fans suggested Luis Garcia. And every time they had that same smile on their face. The feeling is of course mutual.

"Oh I can't explain in English what Liverpool Football Club means to me," says Garcia. "I keep in touch with my team-mates and I love to get back to Anfield when I can. I always will. When I was up there last, I walked into a bar and the barman immediately asked if I wanted Sangria. I get sent pictures of the Spanish drink sent to me via Twitter all the time. It makes me laugh. I am so pleased that I will be involved with this marvellous place for the rest of my life."

And for the record, Luis Garcia does drink Sangria but he thinks he is a bit over 5ft 7. "Closer to 5ft 8," he says with a laugh. On the Kop, he'll always be a giant.

■ Liverpool FC Cult Heroes, by Leo Moynihan (Pitch Publishing) is on sale now. You can also read its Alex Raisbeck chapter for free at http://www.pitchpublishing.co.uk/shop/liverpool-fc-cult-heroes









Traditionally the preserve of batsmen and bowlers, sporting India has been hit for six by football this winter with several ex-Reds in the thick of it

MOVE OVER CRICKET...

Luis Garcia brought a taste of football heaven to India the weekend before Christmas as he helped Atletico de Kolkata become the first winners of the Indian Super League.

Alongside former Reds team-mate Josemi, the 2005 Champions League winner saw his team triumph in the inaugural tournament at the expense of Kerala Blasters, a side player-managed by ex-Reds goalkeeper David James.

"It was great that an Indian player settled the final contest"

The Hero Indian Super League was launched in the hope of making football a major sport in the second-most populated country in the world. Cricket's IPL has revolutionised the Twenty20 version of the game and the three-month footballing ISL was aimed at increasing the popularity of the sport in a nation of 1.26 billion people.

The opening season ran from October to December, operating on a franchise system similar to those in American sports. Players were assigned by draft with the eight competing teams required to have 14 Indians, seven foreigners and one 'marquee' signing in their squad.

In early April 2014 the winning bidders were announced with the eight successful cities being Bangalore, Delhi, Goa, Guwahati, Kochi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune. Among those involved were a host of Bollywood stars and cricketing legends Sachin

Indian Super League

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chennaiyin	14	6	5	3	24	20	23
Goa	14	6	4	4	21	12	22
Atletico de Kolkata	14	4	7	3	16	13	19
Kerala Blasters	14	5	4	5	9	11	19
Delhi Dynamos	14	4	6	4	16	14	18
Pune City	14	4	4	6	12	17	16
Mumbai City	14	4	4	6	12	21	16
NorthEast United	14	3	6	5	11	13	15

Semi-finals

Kerala Blasters 3 Chennaiyin 0
Chennaiyin 3 Kerala Blasters 1 (aet)
Atletico de Kolkata 0 Goa 0
Goa 0 Atletico de Kolkata 0
(Kolkata won 4-2 on pens)

Final

Kerala Blasters 0 Atletico de Kolkata 1



Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly.

David James was announced as the head coach of Kerala, doubling up as their marquee player. Co-owned by Tendulkar and based in the west-coast city of Kochi, they've been one of the biggest success stories, averaging crowds of 49,000 with a best of 61,323. James' squad included ex-Tranmere striker Iain Hume – voted the tournament's best player – former Newcastle attacker Michael Chopra and ex-Motherwell and Celtic midfielder Stephen Pearson.

Other managers in the ISL's debut season were two ex-Evertonians, Peter Reid (Mumbai City) and Marco Materazzi (Chennaiyin), while marquee stars included Alessandro Del Piero, David Trezeguet, Robert Pires, Freddie Ljungberg and Joan Capdevila.

The winning Kolkata franchise, part-owned by Spanish club Atletico Madrid, was captained by Garcia and had Josemi as an ever-present at centre-half throughout their triumphant 17-game campaign.

Reid's Mumbai side selected ex-Arsenal midfielder Ljungberg as its marquee man but also fielded former Liverpool striker Nicolas Anelka, while Pune City, whose ownership group included Italian Serie A side Fiorentina, were another with an LFC link in winger Jermaine Pennant.

Each of the eight teams played each other home and away with the top four going through to the semi-finals of the tournament. Although Pennant missed out on the play-offs with Pune finishing sixth in the standings, he still enjoyed his experience of the ISL: "In our last game we played in front of 60,000. I would see people wearing Liverpool shirts at our games. I'm sure that football will get bigger and bigger now in India."

"There were over 60,000 fans and I could see plenty of LFC shirts"

James' Kerala side booked their place in the final against Garcia's Atletico with both semis going the distance. Kerala needed extra-time after their second leg, while Josemi scored in the penalty shoot-out which saw Atletico reach the final in Mumbai.

The showpiece fixture at the DY Patil Stadium also had a dramatic conclusion. James, who kept five clean sheets throughout the competition, looked set for another shut-out until he was beaten by a strike from Kolkata's central midfielder Mohammed Rafique five minutes into added time.

Garcia said afterwards: "It's fantastic that Rafique got the winning goal – an Indian player settling the contest. I regard the Indian boys highly and the right infrastructure and guidance will make them brilliant in the near future."



LFC IN INDIA



Last summer Jamie Carragher opened the Liverpool FC International Football Academy DSK Shivajians – India's first residential football academy in partnership with a top-flight club. LFC enjoys a strong fan base in India and officials believe the academy will develop the game.

The Academy is located at the DSK International Campus on the outskirts of Pune. It is a purpose-built residential complex with air-conditioned rooms, two full-size pitches – one 4G synthetic turf and one natural grass – an outdoor swimming pool, lecture theatre, classrooms, changing rooms, gym, canteen and convenience store.

Its president Shirish Kulkarni says: "The country is embracing the potential of this sport and we are witnessing growing interest in terms of investments being made. With the world-class facilities, infrastructure and supervision of coaches from LFC we are confident of creating a true legacy in the country."



Didi HAMANN

The club has got the balance just right with its plans for Anfield





I've seen opposition players standing in the tunnel before a game who were already defeated – they just couldn't handle the surroundings and that gave us a huge advantage. Anfield was one such place. You'd see them looking around in awe and just knew they wouldn't perform well.

Personally I was never worried about where I played. That didn't mean I couldn't appreciate great stadiums. The first I visited as a kid was the old Olympic Stadium in Munich. Built for the 1972 games, it was part of the Olympic Park and contained some great architecture. Because it was designed mainly to host athletics the problem was the running track meant the fans were too far from the action. That was one of the reasons why Bayern eventually switched to the fabulous Allianz Arena.

"Anfield has an effect on players – some opponents just can't handle it"

Making such a move is difficult because you can't replicate the history of an old ground. Wembley is a prime example of what I'm talking about. Whenever I go there I find it to be very nice, the facilities are great. The problem is when you step inside you could be anywhere – the stadium could be in Australia or Germany. There is nothing that links it to the old place. I think they should have kept, or maybe incorporated, the twin towers in to the structure.

That's why I feel the plans for Anfield are the best of both worlds. There will be a redeveloped stand with increased capacity, while at the same time the special history of the ground is retained.

I played in a lot of different places for club and country and there is no doubt Anfield just has something about it. Clearly as a former Liverpool player I'm a bit biased. But even before I ever wore the red shirt I thought the same. As a Newcastle player I remember really appreciating how good the place was when we went there at Christmas in 1998. The fact I got sent off later on for two yellow cards didn't take away from that.

The following summer I signed for the club. I don't think a stadium is everything when you are considering an offer, but it can definitely help. Having a fabulous ground gives you extra pulling power because players want to perform there regularly.

Part of what makes Anfield so special is undoubtedly the history. If you go there and walk around the pitch – that's if stadium manager Ged Poynton will let you on the grass – you can recall huge moments in the different areas. You can say that's where Luis Garcia scored against Chelsea in the Champions League semi-final; or that's where Steven Gerrard scored from in the Olympiacos match. A lot of battles have been fought there, that's what makes it so special.

The other aspect of a great ground is the atmosphere. We played the 2001 UEFA Cup final at Borussia Dortmund's Westfalenstadion and I've been back there quite a few times. It is so impressive when you look at that fabulous stand behind the goal and see so many fans.

Increasing the capacity of Anfield will have an obvious impact in terms of attendance and revenue. What's just as important is the fact the noise levels will go up. That will ensure future opponents stand in the tunnel looking uncertain, nervous and already beaten.

Follow Didi on Twitter @DietmarHamann

The year 2015 marks half-a-century since Liverpool FC first won the FA Cup, and it all started with a whistle-stop trip to The Hawthorns...

For the record, Liverpool FC first entered the FA Cup in the club's inaugural season of 1892/93, their interest in the competition ending at the third qualifying-round stage as they were beaten at Northwich Victoria.

Six years on they reached the semi-final, losing 1-0 to Sheffield United in a replay at Derby's Baseball Ground having originally played out a thrilling 4-4 draw at Bolton's Burnden Park.

There were other near-misses. One of the toughest to deal with came in 1906. Liverpool took on Everton at Villa Park but fell to a 2-0 defeat. The Toffees went on to win the following month's final against Newcastle United at Crystal Palace, thus becoming the first team in the city to lift the trophy.

Eight years later, 1914, it was Liverpool's turn to reach the final. Tom Watson's team was strongly fancied to beat Burnley but they lost to a 57th minute goal from an ex-Everton striker, Bert Freeman. There was further heartache at the hands of the Clarets in 1947 as Liverpool lost 1-0 in a semi-final replay at Maine Road. By this time Everton had added a second FA Cup success to their honours list (1933) and Reds players and supporters were beginning to wonder if they'd ever get their turn.

In 1950 a Phil Taylor-managed team reached another final, this time against Arsenal. The weather that day was as gloomy as the result. Gunners striker Reg Lewis struck 18 minutes into each half to seal a 2-0 win for the North Londoners.



By the time Bill Shankly arrived at Liverpool, the Scot was desperate to address this glaring omission from the LFC CV. First, he needed to get the club back into the top-flight. That box was ticked in 1961/62. Next came the bread and butter of winning the league, achieved in 1963/64.

Speaking about the FA Cup in his autobiography, Shanks said, simply: "Liverpool had never won it and that was a terrible thing."

In February 1962 his team were beaten by Preston North End in a fifth-round replay at Old Trafford – the winner scored by future Reds flying winger Peter Thompson. A year later Mike Stringfellow's first-half goal gave Leicester City, who'd become a bit of an LFC bogey team, a 1-0 victory in the semi-final at Hillsborough. Then in 1964 the Reds reached the last eight but were stunned by Swansea Town at Anfield as two goals in as many minutes took the then-humble Welsh side into the semi-finals.

"LIVERPOOL HAD NEVER WON IT AND THAT WAS A TERRIBLE THING"

Shankly, however, was determined to oversee the club's first FA Cup triumph. In 1964/65 the third-round draw handed his men a tough start, away to West Bromwich Albion where Liverpool had lost 3-0 in a league fixture two-and-a-half months earlier. It proved to be an eventful day…

Who needs bus lanes?

The road to Wembley didn't run smoothly – literally. Ahead of the opening game at The Hawthorns, Liverpool's team bus was gridlocked in heavy traffic. Reds captain Ron Yeats later explained in his regular *Liverpool Echo* column: "We had left Anfield apparently in plenty of time for the short trip to West Bromwich, stopped for lunch and then were stopped by the traffic. There was not a lot we could do about it even when a police escort arrived.

"We covered less than 10 miles in the last hour and in the circumstances this was pretty good going. Everybody accepted the hold-up philosophically and none of the players was in any way upset. One can only hope the West Bromwich boys, who must have been sitting ready changed, felt the same way we did."

This was the second time in four seasons the Reds had been delayed in traffic going to an FA Cup tie – remarkably the same thing had happened in February 1962 when the team were making the trip to Deepdale to take on Preston in a fifth-round replay. Ironically the referee that day was Kevin Howley, the same official in charge in the Black Country.

Reds in charge

Despite an 18-minute delay to the kick-off, Liverpool quickly assumed control and went ahead in the 44th minute with a goal from Roger Hunt who applied a clinical finish after being played in by a brilliant pass from Gordon Milne.

Hunt turned provider for Liverpool's second which was equally easy on the eye – Ian St John doubling the advantage 18 minutes after the break.

Spot of bother

Shankly's side seemed on course for a comfortable victory only for the game to have an unexpectedly dramatic finale 13 minutes from the end. Reds captain Yeats was attempting to shield the ball out of play when he appeared to be fouled on two separate occasions. Hearing a whistle, the central defender picked the ball up only to see referee Mr Howley pointing to the penalty spot – it turned out the shrill noise had come from the crowd. The official told the *Echo* afterwards: "It (the whistle) was not mine. I allowed



The Cup-chasing Reds squad of 1964/65



The Hawthorns in the 60s (above) and Bobby Cram's famous son

advantage after Yeats had been fouled when I saw him coming away with the ball." *Echo* reporter Horace Yates added: "After two of the clearest fouls imaginable, Yeats picked up the ball ready to place it for a free-kick. He was just as surprised as [keeper] Tommy Lawrence, the linesman and some of the players around him, when referee Howley pointed to the penalty spot, for they had all heard a whistle blown."

Rowdy's view

Yeats had his say in his regular column in the *Football Echo* the following week: "Somebody in the West Bromwich side played a through-ball which, on a pitch in normal condition, would have travelled out of play for a goal-kick. On this ground it dried up in the mud. Following it up, I was followed by an opponent who kicked me. Then another opponent fouled me: at which point a whistle sounded.

"Several players heard it and so did one of the linesmen – he told me so after the game. I thought that Mr Howley had given a free-kick for the double-foul and picked up the ball to throw it back for the kick to be taken. I was shattered to see the referee pointing to the penalty spot.

"As far as his decision went, he was correct in giving a penalty: he had no option, because I'd flagrantly handled the ball in the box. However, in my opinion, he should have acted before I had chance of picking up the ball."

THE MATCH

WEST BROM 1 LIVERPOOL 2
FA CUP THIRD ROUND
09.01.65 HAWTHORNS
GOALS: Astle (80); Hunt (44), St John (63)
ATTENDANCE: 29,851
REFEREE: Kevin Howley
WEST BROM: Potter; Cram, G Williams; Fraser, Jones, Simpson; Fenton, Fudge, Astle, Hope, Clark.
LIVERPOOL: Lawrence; Lawler, Byrne; Milne, Yeats, Stevenson; Callaghan, Hunt, St John, Smith, Thompson.

Wide of the mark

Baggies full-back Bobby Cram, uncle of future Olympic 1500m silver medallist Steve, was the man entrusted with spot-kick duties and he was highly reliable from 12 yards. Prior to this game, his penalty record during the 1964/65 campaign was a 100% conversion rate, five from five. In the end though Tommy Lawrence wasn't called upon to make a save – Cram put his kick wide – the *Echo* describing it missing 'not by inches but yards. He shot like a novice'. Liverpool's reprieve was only temporary as Albion's prolific marksman Jeff Astle scored 10 minutes from time, but Liverpool played out the remainder of the tie in a composed manner.

Yeats was relieved that his chance of leading Liverpool to FA Cup glory had not been hindered by the whistle from the crowd. He also addressed this wider issue of spectator behaviour in his *Echo* column: "When we played Anderlecht in Brussels we had the same sort of thing. Twice we stopped playing only to discover the sound came from someone in the crowd. It is possible that on Saturday one of our own supporters was responsible in a misguided endeavor to remind the referee of an omission. Yet this could result in the loss of a game for the team which you support."

Hatters out of the hat

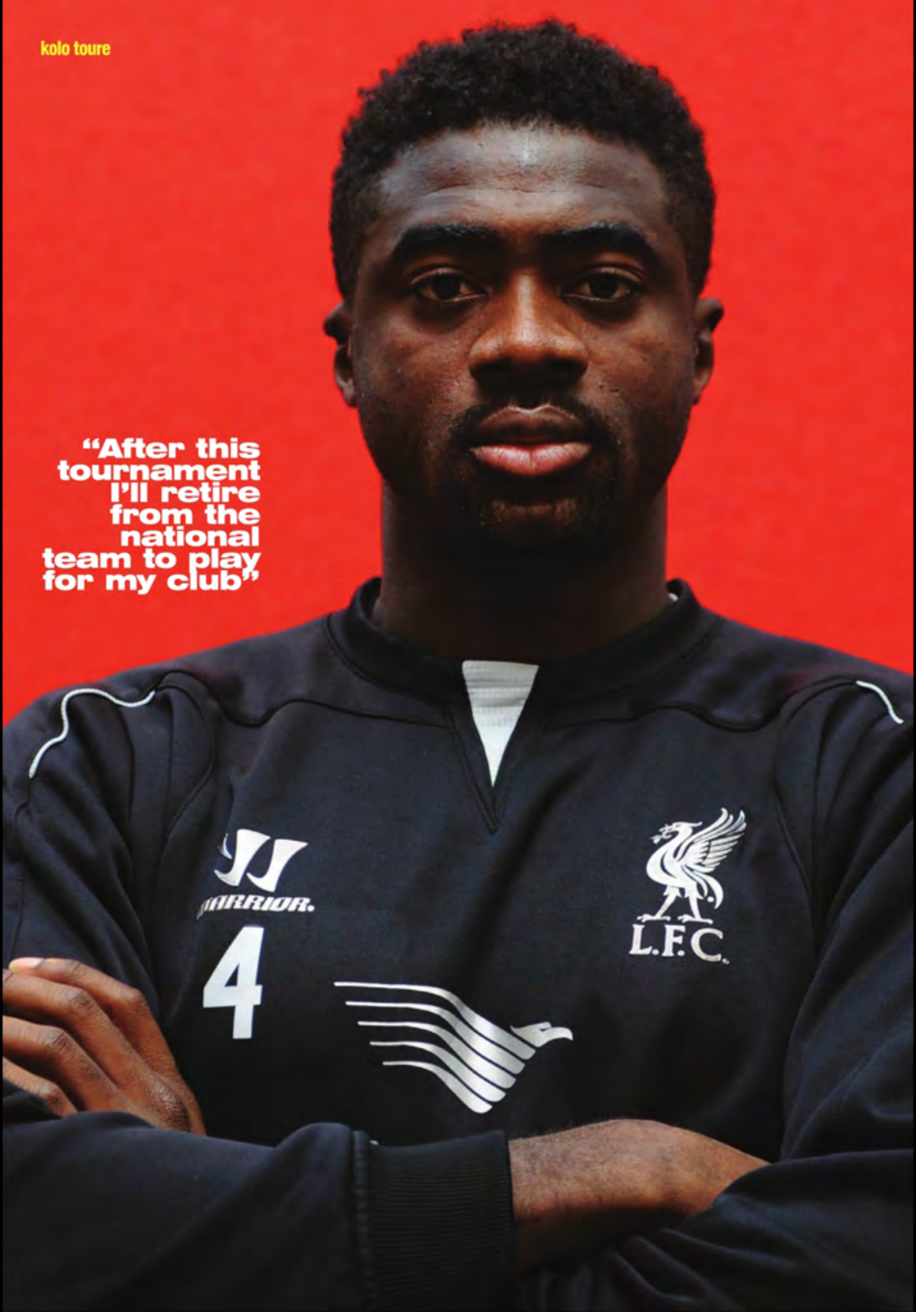
Liverpool's reward for overcoming West Bromwich Albion in such dramataic circumstances was a home tie against Stockport County in round four.

While the Reds had won the First Division title the previous season, Stockport had finished 17th in the Fourth (now League Two). They would end the 1964/65 season propping up the standings altogether and had to rely on the old system of re-election to preserve their Football League status. Surely it would be a stroll in the park for Shankly's side? Find out next time.

3rd round results...

CHESTERFIELD 0 PETERBOROUGH 3
DARLINGTON 0 ARSENAL 2
BARNET 2 PRESTON 3
BRISTOL CITY 1 SHEFFIELD UTD 1
SHEFFIELD UTD 3 BRISTOL CITY 0 (REPLAY)
BURNLEY 1 BRENTFORD 1
BRENTFORD 0 BURNLEY 2 (REPLAY)
SOUTHAMPTON 3 LEYTON ORIENT 1
READING 2 NEWPORT CO 2
NEWPORT CO 0 READING 1 (REPLAY)
LEICESTER C 2 BLACKBURN R 2
BLACKBURN R 1 LEICESTER C 2 (REPLAY)
NOTTM FOREST 1 NORWICH CITY 0
ASTON VILLA 3 COVENTRY CITY 0
BOLTON W 4 WORKINGTON 1
MIDDLESBROUGH 6 OLDHAM ATH 2
WEST BROM 1 LIVERPOOL 2
LUTON TOWN 0 SUNDERLAND 3
EVERTON 2 SHEFFIELD WED 2
SHEFFIELD WED 0 EVERTON 3 (REPLAY)
SWINDON T 1 IPSWICH T 2
DONCASTER R 0 HUDDERSFIELD T 1
MANC CITY 1 SHREWSBURY T 1
SHREWSBURY T 3 MAN CITY 1 (REPLAY)
FULHAM 3 MILLWALL 3
MILLWALL 2 FULHAM 0 (REPLAY)
BRISTOL ROVERS 0 STOCKPORT CO 0
STOCKPORT CO 3 BRISTOL ROVERS 2 (REPLAY)
PORTSMOUTH 0 WOLVES 0
WOLVES 3 PORTSMOUTH 2 (REPLAY)
WEST HAM 4 BIRMINGHAM C 2
MAN UTD 2 CHESTER 1
PLYMOUTH 4 DERBY COUNTY 2
CRYSTAL PALACE 5 BURY 1
CHELSEA 4 NORTHAMPTON T 1
CARDIFF C 1 CHARLTON ATH 2
SWANSEA T 1 NEWCASTLE UTD 0
LEEDS UTD 3 SOUTHPORT 0
TORQUAY UTD 3 TOTTENHAM H 3
TOTTENHAM H 5 TORQUAY UTD 1 (REPLAY)
STOKE C 4 BLACKPOOL 1
ROTHERHAM UTD 5 LINCOLN C 1


LIVERPOOL



"After this tournament I'll retire from the national team to play for my club"

KOLO

Everything you ever wanted to know about the forthcoming Africa Cup of Nations – as previewed by the Reds centre-half

How important is the Africa Cup of Nations to the people of Ivory Coast?

In the past we've been really unlucky in this tournament. I have been in two squads that have reached the final. Everybody in Ivory Coast expected us to win and we, as the players, expected to win as well. Unfortunately we lost both on penalties [to Egypt in 2006 and Zambia in 2012]. These experiences hurt a lot. We feel the emotion of the people, it took a while to overcome the sadness. On each occasion I felt there would be another opportunity. But this time I will finish my international career when the tournament is over, so I know there will be no more opportunities. This makes it very special. I dream about what the celebrations would be like if we won. If I am fit and healthy, I am confident of making the squad.

Would it be a regret if you finished your international career without a winner's medal?

Yes, definitely. Ivory Coast have not won the Africa Cup of Nations since 1992. It has been too long. When you see the players that have represented Ivory Coast since, it is frustrating that we have not pushed further. Didier [Drogba] is an icon for our generation and he led the team so well. We have chased success together but now Didier is retired so we need the next generation to step forward. To be an experienced player and have the senior responsibility, it is a very exciting challenge. Maybe this time it will be our turn [to win]. The most important thing is: we go there, enjoy and give 100 per cent. Qualifying was really difficult. Now we must trust ourselves, give a performance and see what happens. The pressure is on other nations.



Keeping spirits high at Melwood

Why have you decided to retire from international football?

It will allow me to play for longer. I want to play until I can't run. Who knows – maybe it will be when I am 40. With age you gain experience and that's very important. Tactically and technically you don't lose. But with your body, it needs more attention than before: hard work and rest. You see other sports – NBA – the best players are still the most experienced ones. What they do well is: they prepare their bodies then allow their experience to make the difference. In football there is an idea that when you get to 30, a player can't run anymore. That is not true. I know that if you work hard physically you get the stamina and energy to play at the high level with no problem. You have seen this with [Andrea] Pirlo, [Javier] Zanetti and [Paolo] Maldini. My aim is to continue for as long as I possibly can.

"Prepare your body and you can allow experience to make the difference"

What do you consider are the strengths of this Ivory Coast team?

There is a mix of youth and experience. We have so many young players that can help. After the World Cup finals in Brazil last summer, there were a few retirements. There is more of a chance for the youngsters to express themselves, especially in attacking areas of the field. There is no secret in a successful team. You must have a mixture of everything: young and old players; the right manager; and

In World Cup action for Ivory Coast v Greece

"It's rare to have two scorers in Doumbia and Bony at the same time"

of course the determination to win. Without determination, you will go nowhere.

It must be a big advantage having two strikers like Wilfried Bony and Seydou Doumbia in top form...

These players have done very well at club-level over a number of seasons. For CSKA Moscow, Doumbia is nearly always one of the top scorers in the Russian League, and Bony of course has adapted to the Premier League easily. He's now probably Swansea City's most important player because he gives the team a focus in attack. Replacing Didier [Drogba] in the Ivory Coast national team, there is a lot of pressure. But I am sure if they believe it, they [Doumbia and Bony] will become key players for Ivory Coast. It is rare to have two natural goalscorers at any level of football and fortunately we have two right now. This could be very important when the games are tight and you only have one chance to score.

Which teams do you think are capable of winning the Africa Cup of Nations?

Well, we go there [to Equatorial Guinea] with less pressure than before, as I said. The expectations are not like in previous tournaments where we had many players at top European clubs. This time Algeria are the favourites. Senegal have a strong team, and Ghana. You can't underestimate Cameroon. Ivory Coast is maybe fifth favourite – possibly less, because we have not been performing like we used to. The fact the focus is on other teams rather than us is a big advantage.

How is the Africa Cup of Nations different to European tournaments?

In every way! Nothing is the same: the accommodation is not the same;



And for Liverpool v Real Madrid in the Champions League

Interview by Simon Hughes

"It's not like Europe – the grass is different, so is the speed of the game"

then there's the grass on the pitch and the speed of the game. It's more difficult. Zambia won it in 2012 and last time it was Nigeria. Before that, Egypt were champions three in a row. Most of the players in each of those teams played in their domestic league. This helps a lot. If you play in Africa, you know the conditions better than the European-based players. Here we play on fantastic grass, in fantastic stadiums, stay in fantastic hotels – we really are so, so lucky. When we go back we have to adapt quickly, particularly to the weather. You come from northern Europe where it is two degrees and into an environment where it is suddenly 30 degrees. You sweat and lose a lot of water. Rehydration is crucial if you want to finish the game at a high level.

The Ivory Coast coach, Herve Renard, won the cup with Zambia the last time it was held in Equatorial Guinea when it was co-hosted with Gabon...

I really like him. He's a really good manager. He is very clever tactically, treats everybody with respect and understands the mind of a footballer. With time, he can lead us to the top – I am sure. Renard's Zambia team was very exciting to watch and played the conditions well. Sadly I missed a penalty in the shoot-out and this will always be a disappointment. Hopefully I will get a chance to make up for it in this competition.

WHO WHEN WHERE

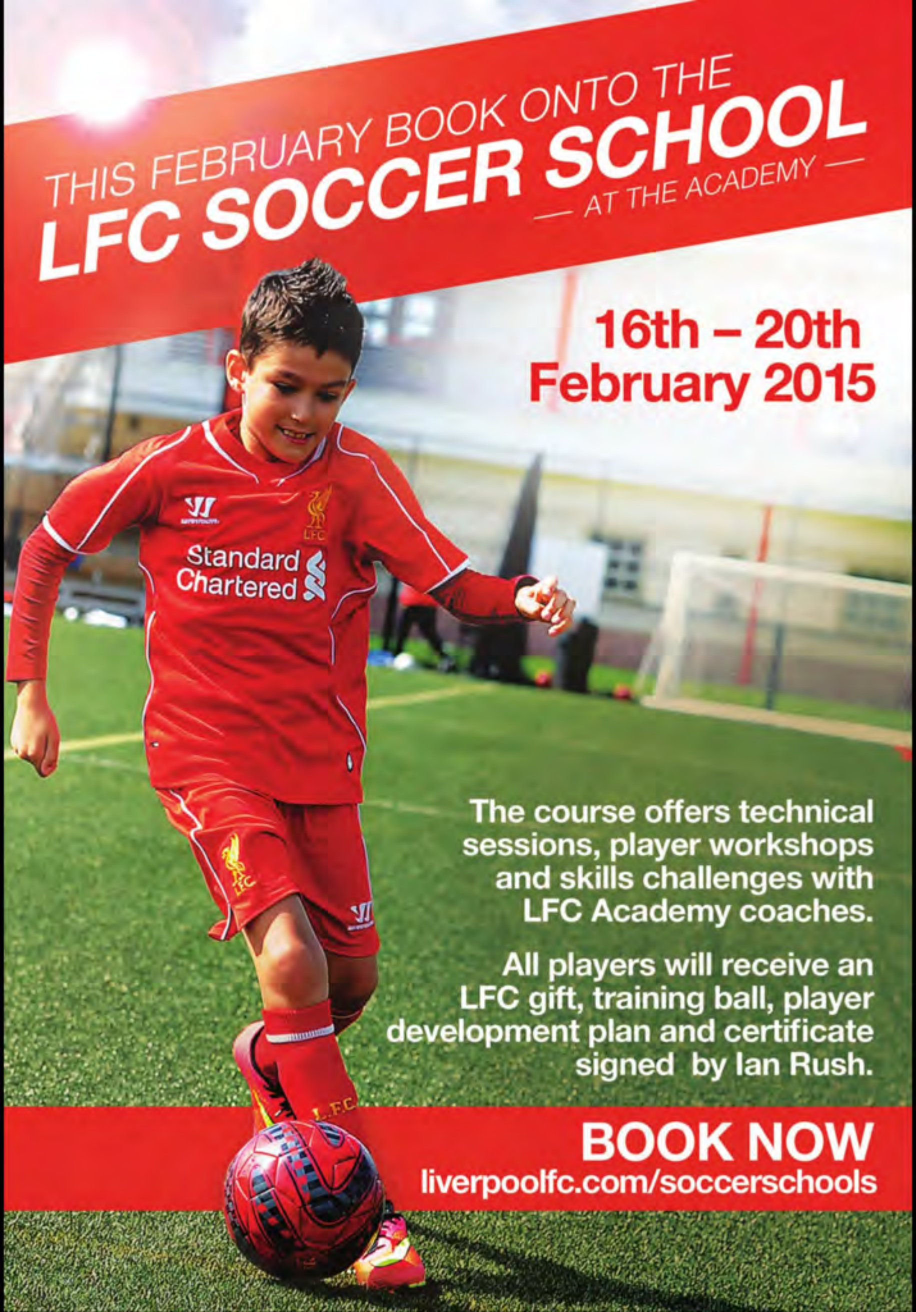
The tournament was originally due to take place in Morocco but was switched to Equatorial Guinea after the former raised concerns about the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. It will take place from 17 January to 8 February in four host cities: Bata, Malabo, Mongomo and Ebebiyin. Sixteen teams have made the finals but reigning champions Nigeria are not among them.

GROUP A: Equatorial Guinea; Burkina Faso; Gabon; Congo
GROUP B: Zambia; Tunisia; Cape Verde; DR Congo
GROUP C: Ghana; Algeria; South Africa; Senegal
GROUP D: Ivory Coast; Mali; Cameroon; Guinea

Most trophy wins:
7 **Egypt** (1957, 1959, 1986, 1998, 2006, 2008, 2010)
4 **Ghana** (1963, 1965, 1978, 1982); Cameroon (1984, 1988, 2000, 2002)
3 **Nigeria** (1980, 1994, 2013)
2 **DR Congo** (1968, 1974)
1 **Ivory Coast** (1992); Zambia (2012); Tunisia (2004); Sudan (1970); Algeria (1990); Ethiopia (1962); Morocco (1976); South Africa (1996); Congo (1972)

Most tournament goals:
18 Samuel Eto'o (Cameroon)


Cameroon's first success in 1984


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OUT OF AFRICA

The 2015 Africa Cup of Nations will take place between 17 January and 8 February in Equatorial Guinea. Here's how African internationals with an LFC connection have fared in the competition





Oussama Assaidi (Morocco)
Reds winger on-loan at Stoke City, he scored his first international goal in an Africa Cup of Nations qualifier against Algeria in June 2011. He was in the Morocco squad for the 2012 and 2013 tournaments.



El-Hadji Diouf (Senegal)
A star of Senegal's 2002 World Cup campaign, the forward also represented his country at that year's Africa Cup of Nations which ended with them finishing as runners-up. He was twice named African footballer of the year.



Salif Diao (Senegal)
The midfielder was part of the Senegal squad that finished as runners-up in the 2002 Africa Cup of Nations and also played in the 2004 tournament.





Nabil El Zhar (Morocco)
The former Reds attacker, currently playing alongside Sissoko at Levante, has won 24 caps for Morocco, scoring three goals. He has yet to figure in a Nations Cup finals, having missed out on the squad in 2012 and 2013.



Rigobert Song (Cameroon)

Defender who made 38 appearances for the Reds between January 1999 and September 2000. An international regular for 17 years, he won an incredible 137 caps. Song appeared in a record eight African Cup of Nations tournaments, captaining Cameroon in five of them. He was on the winning team on two occasions – in Nigeria in 2000 and Mali in 2002. He played in a record 36 successive Africa Cup of Nations matches – a total of 3,201 minutes.

Momo Sissoko (Mali)

Defensive midfielder who played 87 times for the Reds between 2005 and 2007. Now at Spanish side Levante, he received his first international call-up in 2004 and has appeared in a host of Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers and tournaments since.



Charles Itandje (Cameroon)

The French-born keeper appeared for the Indomitable Lions at last summer's World Cup and has been capped 11 times. He's set to be their first-choice keeper at the 2015 finals. He plays for Greek side PAOK after spending last season at Konyaspor.



Carl Medjani (Algeria)

The Trabzonspor centre-back never made a first-team appearance for the Reds. Lyon-born, he declared for Algeria and has been capped 32 times since 2010. He was part of the Algerian squad at the 2013 tournament, but his side went out in the group stage. He started the opening game – a 1-0 defeat to Tunisia.





Bruce Grobbelaar (Zimbabwe)

The Reds legend, now coaching at Ottowa Fury in Canada, won 33 caps for Zimbabwe between 1977 and 1998 but never appeared at a Nations Cup finals.

Djimi Traore (Mali)

A 2005 UEFA Champions League winner, the left-sided defender made 141 appearances for LFC. He won six caps for Mali between 2004 and 2006 but has never played in a Nations Cup.

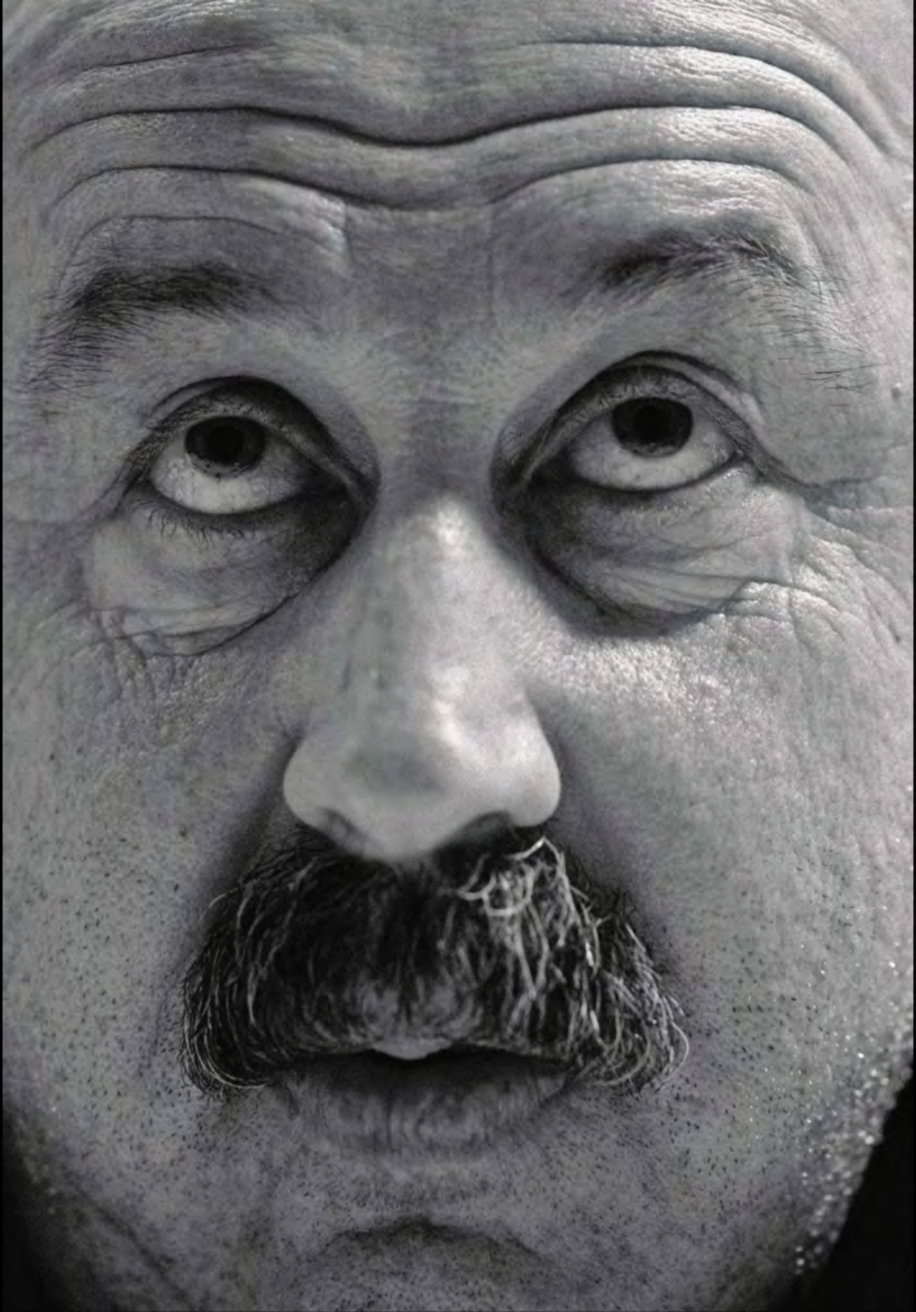
Titi Camara (Guinea)

The attacker played 37 times for Liverpool, scoring 10 goals during the 1999/00 season. He represented Guinea at the 2004 Nations Cup, scoring three goals in the group stage which meant he finished one behind the tournament's leading scorers.



Victor Moses (Nigeria)

The winger played on-loan for the Reds last season and appeared for Nigeria in the 2013 finals. He scored two penalties in their final group game against Ethiopia, which Nigeria needed to win to go through. The Super Eagles went on to win the tournament with Moses starting the final and playing the entire game.





Breaking Vlad

Valery Gazzaev coached Spartak Vladikavkaz to greatness – but what happened after they played LFC? Simon Hughes investigates

Upon arrival at an otherwise eerily redundant airport in the Republic of Northern Ossetia, a squadron of ex-Soviet military helicopters flanked the Liverpool FC team. According to intelligence, the savage fighting in bordering Chechnya 40 miles away made the Western visitors a target for rebel activists.

After swiftly passing through customs and the safe negotiation of a 20km bus-ride across barren terrain, the 120-strong convoy of players, officials and supporters from Merseyside sped to a hotel where authorities placed armed guards at its entrance and on all floors.

Inside the unimaginatively named Spartak Stadium the following evening, 1,000 police surrounded the pitch; supported by a militia of salivating Rottweilers.

A trip to Vladikavkaz might seem like an Orwellian nightmare but Roy Evans was rather more levelled in his thinking. "A lot of managers say it in Europe but the game really is a journey into the unknown," said Liverpool's manager. "It could be a tricky one, this."

Evans, who watched the UEFA Cup first-round draw for the 1995/96 season on Teletext at his home in Aughton, admitted there had been some confusion about the identity of Liverpool's opponent with it initially being claimed that the Reds had been paired with Spartak Vladivostok, a team based in a city on Russia's Pacific

The Republican Spartak Stadium, Vladikavkaz

"The Echo described the first leg as one of LFC's best ever victories"

coastline 12,000 miles and nine time-zones away – further east than any part of China. Instead it was Vladikavkaz – a mere 7,000-mile round-trip in total.

The Russians had qualified by finishing fourth in their domestic league under the guidance of coach Valery Gazzaev. Their squad was multi-ethnic with players from across the old Soviet empire. There were three Georgians, two Belarussians and Ossets, a Ukrainian, a Kubardinian, a Circassian, a Balkan, an Uzbek, an ethnic Greek born in Georgia, a Romany and an Azerbaijani.

"Vladikavkaz were supported by a strong local administration that wanted the team to do well and backed the manager who was equally passionate about the team and the area," says Marc Bennetts, a journalist based in Moscow. "Gazzaev was born and brought up in Vladikavkaz when it was known as Ordzhonikidze and very passionate about the success of his local side so that spurred him on. He was one of the great Soviet strikers of the past and his fame helped him to attract some good players to the South – players that wouldn't usually consider moving to this region. Most of all, he built a competent side that worked hard for each other and a strong team spirit helped them a long way."

Gazzaev was confident Vladikavkaz were capable of matching Liverpool. "Last year we did a lot of work on selection," he said. "In fact we sacked 10 and took on 10 players. The new ones are first-class technically and very strong individually."

He revealed a historical appreciation of Liverpool's European exploits. "I've got tapes of them from the time when Dalglish was in the team and when Rush was at his peak," he added. "Liverpool, in my opinion are not a traditional English side. They play their own different game – more of a team game, more technical. This is because of the presence of players such as Barnes, Fowler and McManaman. They are players who play more technical, creative football."

Liverpool's record against Russian (or former Soviet) clubs was poor. Knocked out of Europe by Dynamo Tbilisi in 1979 following a 3-0 reverse in Georgia, they suffered defeats both home and away to Spartak Moscow in 1992. Form ahead of this tie was also erratic; losing two of the opening five Premier League games to a Tony Yeboah-inspired Leeds United as well as Wimbledon.

At 31 it was a debut European season for skipper John Barnes



The results prompted untypical cautiousness from Evans who abandoned a two-man strike-force, instead preferring to deploy recent club-record signing Stan Collymore alone upfront with Michael Thomas holding in midfield. Robbie Fowler was only selected on the bench.

Liverpool struggled to settle initially and when the hosts, backed by a capacity attendance, took the lead after 20 minutes through Mirjalol Qosimov, the worst was feared. Yet Liverpool recovered, with Steve McManaman equalising after rounding the goalkeeper, converting from an acute angle. Then in the second half a 30-yard thunderbolt from Jamie Redknapp secured what seemed an unlikely victory. It led to the bold claim from the *Liverpool Echo* who

described it as 'one of the club's greatest victories in 30 years of European competition'.

At 31 years of age John Barnes was playing in only his second European match for Liverpool despite being the most decorated player in the squad and he believed the result indicated that Evans' team were becoming more streetwise.

"I watched our games against Spartak Moscow in 1992 and I thought we were very naive. We played end-to-end stuff in the home match and left ourselves open to the counter-attack, which was their game. Considering we've managed to win in Vladikavkaz, I'd say we've come of age."

Despite having their plane impounded upon arrival at Speke Airport for licensing reasons, Vladikavkaz were in confident mood for the second leg after moving towards the Russian title, seven points ahead of second place.

The day before the match in Vladikavkaz, a crowd of just 21,000 at Ewood Park had watched Blackburn Rovers lose to Spartak Moscow in the Champions League, so Liverpool chief executive Peter Robinson decided to slash prices for the Anfield return. "Ewood was half-empty and the lack of atmosphere didn't help Blackburn," Robinson reasoned. "We need to make sure the same thing doesn't happen to us."

On the night that Manchester United were dumped out of the UEFA Cup by Rotor Volgograd, also of Russia, Liverpool struggled to a goalless draw without striker Collymore who was rested. "Stan won't play well every time he goes onto the pitch," Evans said. "It's still a learning process for us both. Unfortunately he becomes the target of the media because of his price-tag and that's unfair. Sometimes you can think too much about things and try to change. But often you need to be yourself and I just think Stan needs to be Stan. Some of the service he gets here is obviously different to what he was used to at Nottingham Forest. But I have no doubt he'll get there."

While Collymore proved to be a problem for Evans until the striker's departure to Aston Villa in 1997, and while Vladikavkaz soon became only the tenth club in 59 years from outside Moscow to secure the Russian title, the narrow aggregate loss to Liverpool would prove to be their best performance in European competition.

Since a humiliating 10-3 aggregate defeat to Rangers in Champions League qualifying 12 months after their matches with Liverpool, Vladikavkaz have failed to finish in the top half of the Russian top flight.

"Although it was obvious they were a rapidly improving team under Gazzaev, when Vladikavkaz won the title in 95 it came as a major surprise," Bennetts says. "Unlike now, where a team can come from nowhere with a lot of money and achieve success, the Vladikavkaz story was more about hard work and togetherness. Unfortunately that wasn't enough in the long term."


Ian Rush shoots during the goalless second leg at Anfield

The uncertain political situation in Chechnya made it difficult for Vladikavkaz to maintain development. A ceasefire agreed in August 1996 ended the war but three years later rebels launched an invasion of Dagestan leading to a second conflict, which raged for 10 months.

Since, Vladikavkaz have had more identities than a decommissioned super agent from the KGB. Previously called Spartak Ordzhonikidze they have been known as Spartak Vladikavkaz (1990-94 and 2006), Spartak-Alania Vladikavkaz (1995-96 and 2003-06) and Alania Vladikavkaz (1997-203 and from 2007 until now).

After progressing to the Russian cup final without scoring a single goal in normal time, Alania improbably reached the Europa League in 2011. All of their victories were secured in either extra-time or via a penalty shoot-out and despite losing 2-1 to CSKA, Alania qualified by virtue of the fact that the Muscovites had already sealed a Champions League place by winning the Russian championship. In Europe, Aktobe of Kazakhstan were edged out (again on penalties) before Turkey's Besiktas proved too strong, with Alania exiting 3-2 on aggregate.

By February 2014, Alania had pulled out of the Russian second division after failing to appear for an away game. Debts of more than £25 million were soon revealed following the withdrawal of the club's main sponsor, RusHydro. Now in the 11-team third tier, which is split regionally, Alania recently concluded the 2014 season in ninth position.

The Gazzaev dynasty

Valery Gazzaev was born and bred in Vladikavkaz and played as a striker for hometown club Spartak, among other teams, before coaching them in the mid-to-late 1990s. He subsequently moved to CSKA Moscow whom he guided to UEFA Cup final success against Sporting in their own Lisbon stadium – the first silverware for a Russian side in any European competition – earning a UEFA Super Cup showdown with Liverpool, then under Rafael Benitez, in Monaco in August 2005. The Reds won 3-1.

There followed spells for Gazzaev in charge of the Russian national side and Dynamo Kiev before he returned to Vladikavkaz as coach and then club president. His son Vladimir also coached Spartak and is currently boss of Aktobe, five times winners of the Kazakhstan Premier League. Most recently they reached the third qualifying round of the Champions League then lost a play-off for the Europa League group stages.





And that's just the first verse…

Eastern express

Four intrepid Reds recall the trip of a lifetime to UEFA's outer reaches

At 2,260 miles from Anfield, the trip to Vladikavkaz in the Russian republic of North Ossetia in the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains (closer to Tehran than Moscow) was the second-furthest LFC had ever travelled in Europe (behind Dinamo Tbilisi at 2,320 miles). The *Daily Telegraph* notes: 'The game has cult status among Liverpool supporters as it's widely believed 38 fans admirably made the gruelling journey to see their team play'.

Among them were David Murphy, Ian Vidamour, Mike Smith and John Pearman. "We flew with the team," recalls Murphy," and the plane had to be Russian because it was entering their airspace. I think it was an old Aeroflot model. The players sat at the front with the fans at the back.

"When we landed I was first down the steps and as I got to the bottom an important-looking man from the British Embassy asked if I was [LFC chairman] David Moores!"

Vidamour adds: "Because it was Russia we'd assumed it'd be freezing and took loads of warm clothes. We didn't need any of them. It was more like the climate in Turkey so we just wore our shorts."

Smith remembers going on a sightseeing tour up the Caucasus Mountains, and the bus breaking down. "One of the lads flagged down an army truck and our driver had a chat with them, walked off to a farmhouse and came back with a rope so the truck could tow us back to the hotel."

Pearman has nothing but pleasant memories: "We'd been advised by the Home Office not to travel, but outside the hotel was a large crowd of locals holding up placards saying 'Welcome', 'Hello' and 'YNWA' which was also chalked on the pavements. And when we arrived for the game the coach was surrounded by hundreds of home supporters who started applauding. One of us said: 'I feel like a Beatle'. It was possibly the friendliest welcome I've ever experienced. I think that they even burst into a Lennon & McCartney song."

"We'd been advised not to travel but it was a wondefully friendly welcome"




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HOW WE WON THE LEAGUE... AGAIN!

American goalkeeper Libby Stout ended her first season with Liverpool Ladies as a champion and her team-mates' player of the year. In the second of our two-part feature she explains how the team clinched the FA Women's Super League title

PART TWO



Libby with fellow goalie Danielle Gibbons and the WSL trophy


A bad day for the Reds at City

MATCHDAY 8
27 July 2014
Manchester City 1 Liverpool 0

The week before this game we had won 3-1 at Bristol Academy, but we were missing three players who were away with England at the Under-20s World Cup [in Canada]. A few teams had games cancelled because of players being at that tournament, but we had three – and those girls were vital to our success. We felt quite hard-done-by that we weren't able to secure some postponements.

We were disappointed to lose this match but Manchester City was a tough place to go. We conceded a scrappy goal and knew it wasn't our best performance.

After the game we were five points behind leaders Birmingham having played a game more and only had another 18 points to play for. To be honest, I felt that we might have lost the league that day.

MATCHDAY 9
9 August 2014
Liverpool 2 Chelsea 0

Chelsea were one of our main rivals for the title so when we won this match with such dominance, the belief was back. We had so much confidence after that game and really felt: yes, we can do this. Chelsea were above us and could have put us out of the picture that day. But the way they performed in that match also left us thinking that if they continued to play like that, we definitely had a shot at the title.

It was probably one of our best home games of the season and I was very proud of our performance. It was good to get a shut-out, but they didn't threaten us too much and I didn't have to do a whole lot. We shut them down quite well and goals from Gemma Davison and Lucy Bronze secured the victory.


Davison scores!



Zelem makes the breakthrough

MATCHDAY 10
23 August 2014
Liverpool 1 Notts County 0

Notts County conceded the least goals in the whole league so we knew this match was going to be difficult. We knew we had to win – there really wasn't any other option. Katie Zelem came off the bench late on and scored with one of her first touches. Katie was our young player of the year and provided a real spark for us. She's really lively, tires people out and creates goalscoring opportunities. Again, Notts County didn't have too many chances so it was a case of trying to break them down and then see the game out.


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Dowie: goal

MATCHDAY 11
4 September 2014
Everton 2 Liverpool 2

By the time we played Everton for the second time in the league, we had four matches left and knew they would all be hard fixtures. Although Everton were bottom, they had played really well against us all year.

We were in control but they counter-attacked well and won a lot of corners. They went 1-0 up from one and I was disappointed in myself because it shouldn't have happened. We equalised before half-time through Tash Dowie. Kate Longhurst then put us in front and we felt in control.

I don't know whether it was complacency but we couldn't make it count. When we went up 2-1, we thought we'd be okay. We had plenty of chances but Nikita Parris nicked the equaliser. Credit to her – it was a fantastic finish. The 2-2 result was tough because we felt we needed to win our last four. Again it was frustrating we weren't able to do that. Fortunately, throughout the last month of the season other results seemed to pan out for us. If it didn't go well for us, it would tend to go badly for the teams above us too.

MATCHDAY 12
21 September 2014
Birmingham City 1 Liverpool 2

We went into this game knowing we had to win. Everton had drawn with Birmingham in the latter's catch-up game, then the night before our match Notts County beat Chelsea 1-0. Big results for us and major blows for them. We would strengthen our position if we could beat Birmingham.

I remember telling the other girls I'd not felt so nervous before. So much was riding on every decision you made. I remember almost not being able to communicate because I was so focused on what I was doing. I think it led to my mistake in the second half.

Amanda Da Costa had put us 1-0 up, but that almost put more pressure on us because we felt like: okay, we can do this, we just have to see the game out. I'd made some saves but then, in the 87th minute, I came out and made a poor clearance which was hit back over my head from 40 yards by Hannah Keryakoplis. Looking back, I still think the decision to come out was the correct one – it was just a poor clearance. I made a mistake and very much owned up. When I saw the ball sailing over my head, I screamed out loud: 'No no no!' I knew that if we tied that match, the title had probably gone.


In the wars at Birmingham

I remember sitting on the ground with my head in my hands. Our captain Gemma Bonner picked me up and said: 'You've got to carry on'. You think that everything you've worked so hard for has just disappeared. But as soon as I looked up, I saw the ball bouncing into the net at the other end and our team celebrating. I couldn't believe it. Fara Williams had scored straight from the kick-off after noticing their keeper off her line. In the footage you can see my absolute disbelief.

Fara is an amazing player and person. I have said to her face that I have honestly never met anyone like her. To even think of shooting from the kick-off was something else, but to execute it perfectly shows what a great player she is. You wouldn't find another player in the WSL who would be able to do that in terms of the speed of thought and skill.

I was bailed out by my team that day. I was quite emotional after the game, having gone from such a low to such a high. I was crying because I was so thankful to be a part of a team that picks each other up and gets the job done. I gave Fara the biggest hug afterwards and said thank you.

The clip of the mistake was posted on social media but I just needed to put it aside. The girls helped me get through. We got the win and the three points we needed.

LIBBY STOUT FACTFILE

Position: Goalkeeper
Age: 24.
Birthplace: Louisville, Kentucky
International: United States Under-20s and Under-23s
Previous clubs: Femin Yzeure Allier Auvergne (France), BV Cloppenburg (Germany)

MATCHDAY 13
5 October 2014
Arsenal 3 Liverpool 3

My parents had come over from America and were in town to see the last three games and this was another interesting one! Arsenal scored after about 30 seconds with a great finish. We were sleeping like a bunch of cones and they scored again from a bit of a mishap, so we were down 2-0 after about 10 minutes. For some reason, we did have tendencies to come out a little slow in games and we were getting punished for that.

But even at 2-0 and later 3-1 down, I never felt we'd lose. That may sound strange when you are trailing by two goals but we knew we had time and we knew we were talented. We just needed to pick ourselves up and go.

Fara's free-kick before half-time was pivotal because to get a goal back then was a big positive. Coming into the second half we knew we had to put the first half behind us but when they scored a third early in the second half, it was tough.

A big thing that changed the game was getting Gemma Davison on the pitch. She brought a massive spark and her speed off the wing was awesome. She gave Arsenal things to deal with, which we needed.



Rolser returns!

Then Nici Rolser came on for her first appearance after her ACL injury. To come on in those circumstances and score a goal – almost two – after missing most of the season was amazing. When she scored we had plenty of time to come back and get another goal. There was an incident where the girls all said we had scored again and that the ball was over the line, although I couldn't see it from so far away! However when I saw Gemma Davison start her run in the final minute, I just knew she was going to score. Her feet are so quick and when she gets going nothing stops her.

It was a very exciting game but afterwards we still thought that we hadn't done enough and we had let ourselves down. Chelsea and Birmingham both got good results and everything was now out of our hands. We were proud of the grit we showed in coming back but we thought we'd let the title – and Champions League qualification – slip by.



MATCHDAY 14
12 October 2014 Liverpool 3 Bristol Academy 0

Four days before the final round of matches, we'd made our debut in the UEFA Women's Champions League against Linkopings [winning the first leg at home 2-1]. That was also one of the best performances we put in all year, both football-wise and in terms of fight. So we had a lot of confidence coming into the Bristol fixture. We needed to win by two goals and required other things to happen for us, but we were focused.

Beardy [manager Matt Beard] said: 'I don't want anyone to be talking about the other games'. But the crowd were taking peeks at their phones and I knew Man City had scored against Chelsea because I heard someone talking about [City midfielder] Jill Scott.

At half-time everyone seemed quite positive. I asked my goalkeeping coach Pottsy [Joe Potts] what was happening and he whispered the scores to me! They were in our favour and at that point we began to think it could happen. It was still 0-0 in our match but we'd dominated the first half and just had to be patient. We scored in the first few minutes of the second through Tash and the next goal came quickly too from Lucy Bronze. I don't think I had much to do in that whole game – I pretty much played as a sweeper – and it was great to get a shut-out again for our defence.

The crowd had started chanting that we were top of the league but with about 20 minutes to go they stopped. After we had won our game, I ran into the circle of players and staff and was asking: 'What's going on?' Pottsy said things were still in our favour but the other games were still going on. Everyone was standing round not sure what to do. Some were emotional, some excited.

My parents were in the stands and I was looking at them for some sort of clue. Then I saw was someone in the hospitality boxes giving us the thumbs-up. Then I was thinking: is it real?' Beardy started celebrating and we all went nuts! It wasn't just us out on that pitch – it was our fans, parents, everybody there rooting for us. It was an amazing moment and absolutely the best day of my football career.

It was nice to have my parents over to share that moment. This was the first champions spot I have ever won so for them to be able to see that was special. They saw me in college finish second every year…they never saw me win. So to share that with them meant the world and the fact it meant so much to them made it even more special.

That final day is hard to describe to people. You see it on paper and think: oh, they won the league. But that doesn't begin to explain the story behind it.

I guess the stars were aligned.

FINAL FA WSL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Liverpool	14	7	5	2	19	10	9	26
Chelsea	14	8	2	4	23	16	7	26
Birmingham	14	7	4	3	20	14	6	25
Arsenal	14	6	3	5	24	21	3	21
Man City	14	6	1	7	13	16	-3	19
Notts County	14	4	6	4	12	8	4	18
Bristol Acad	14	5	1	8	18	24	-6	16
Everton	14	0	4	10	10	30	-20	4

Liverpool's Under-19s have thrived in this season's UEFA Youth League

Neil MELLOR



Olympiacos, Istanbul, the 2006 FA Cup final… How often have Liverpool had to turn a game around before going on to enjoy success? Football isn't straightforward. You won't always enjoy a simple victory. Quite often – particularly in important games – you need to overcome adversity to get the right result.

Our Under-19s did exactly that in the UEFA Youth League before Christmas. Going in to the last game of the group stages – the competition follows the same format as the Champions League – they needed a win by two goals or more against Basel to progress.

In such a situation it would be easy to go gung-ho from the start and try to batter the opposition. Instead they showed great game management. Nobody panicked and they didn't take unnecessary risks that might have led to Basel getting the first goal and taking control of the situation.

It took until the 39th minute before Liverpool went in front, Ryan Kent scoring. But they still needed another goal going into the 13 minutes of additional time that were added on after Sam Hart suffered a head injury.

They scored twice in that period to earn a 3-0 win and move into the last 16. As well as earning them another big game against what will undoubtedly be a talented Benfica side, they have also gained some invaluable experience of being in an unusual situation.

It's one thing knowing you need a win; when it has to be by a certain margin that only adds to the pressure. It is a real challenge. As a first-team player you will be challenged every day, so the more times young players face those type of hurdles the better it is for their development. If any of the lads find themselves in that must-win-by-a-certain-margin situation again they'll know exactly how to go about it. Huge credit has to go to the coaching staff at the Academy for preparing the side so well and enabling them to get the right result.

"The lads were in a must-win situation and they managed it well"



Overall the UEFA Youth League has been hugely beneficial for the lads. They've faced Basel, Real Madrid and Ludogorets – sides with varied styles and from different footballing cultures. When I played against European teams it was certainly not the same as the Premier League. Defenders would try to pinch or poke you in the hope of getting a reaction. They also employed other formations and tactics. So coming up against all that – and defeating them – at U19 level is really educational.

There's also the fact that squad travelled to the games with the first team. They got to see how the routine works: the build-up to the match, matchday itself, staying in a hotel and not being bored while doing so. That's vital because if they do progress to the senior squad they'll already have a good idea of how everything works.

Personally I think it's hugely beneficial that the U19s went to watch the first-team games in Europe as part of the away trips. It's vital for any youngster who wants to force his way into Brendan Rodgers' plans. They need to be there to see who plays in the same position, the tactics used and how the crowd reacts to what's going on. Sitting on the sideline for those 90 minutes should be educational and aid their development.

You can see some of the young lads have already benefited from playing in Europe and that learning curve will continue when the competition resumes. If they do well and go even further it could help them to get on the first team's pre-season tour in July and August. That should be the target because some of them definitely possess the talent to get there. Games against Benfica can help them stake a big claim.

Follow Neil on Twitter @NeilMellor33

88 AUSSIE REDS
Why LFC are football's kings Down Under



The bit at the back for Liverpool FC's legions of fans at home and all over the world…



80 Can Emre score again?



86 Foundation latest news



94 Retro shirts now available



97 Reds on Instagram

THE MONTH AHEAD

JAN

Wombling three

Liverpool hope higher status will work to their advantage when round three of the FA Cup serves up a trip to AFC Wimbledon, live on BBC1. Billed as a repeat of the famous 1988 FA Cup final, the tie on Monday 5 January will be the Reds' first fixture against AFC since their birth as a phoenix club in 2002.

Managed by ex-Wimbledon player Neal Ardley (pictured in action against LFC in 1997, below), the League Two side have beaten York City and Wycombe Wanderers to reach the last 64 of the competition.

AFC are managed by former Wimbledon player Neal Ardley

The Reds played 34 games against the original Wimbledon FC with the most recent coming at Selhurst Park in April 2000 when Emile Heskey's double secured a 2-1 Premier League success.

AFC play at the 4,850 Kingsmeadow Stadium in Kingston-upon-Thames. Should Liverpool progress, the fourth round will take place on the weekend of 23 to 25 January.



BIRTHDAY REDS

Jon Flanagan 22 on 1 January
Jose Enrique 29 on 23 January
Phil Thompson 61 on 21 January
Jamie Carragher 37 on 28 January
Hughie McAuley 62 on 8 January
Lucas Leiva 28 on 9 January
Peter Beardsley 54 on 18 January
David Fairclough 58 on 5 January
Andy Carroll 26 on 6 January
Peter Crouch 34 on 30 January
Brendan Rodgers 42 on 26 January
Maxi Rodriguez 34 on 2 January
Ray Houghton 53 on 9 January
Emre Can 21 on 12 January
Alvaro Arbeloa 32 on 17 January



Anniversaries

7 years since Martin Skrtel signed for Liverpool FC on 11 Jan

7 years since Lucas scored his first goal for Liverpool on 26 Jan

18 years since centre-half Jamie Carragher scored his first goal for the Reds on 18 Jan

28 years since ace striker John Aldridge joined LFC on 27 Jan

37 years since Graeme Souness made his Liverpool debut on 14 Jan

69 years since Billy Liddell and Bob Paisley made their LFC debuts in an FA Cup tie at Chester on 5 Jan



Reds up for the cup

Jose Mourinho will bring Chelsea to Anfield for another cup semi-final. Liverpool's 3-1 Capital One Cup win at Bournemouth set up the last-four clash with the Blues, who have overcome Bolton, Shrewsbury and Derby County to reach this stage of the tournament. Liverpool have won three of four previous League Cup ties against Chelsea. In 2011/12 they won 2-0 at Stamford Bridge in a fifth round on their way to winning the trophy for a record eighth time. The first leg will take place on Tuesday 20 December (7.45pm kick-off) with the return at Stamford Bridge being held seven days later.



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Anfield's gold standard

Liverpool FC's newly-installed Changing Places facility has been awarded gold standard – setting the benchmark for other stadia and sporting venues.

Changing Places provide life-changing facilities for thousands of people with multiple and complex disabilities who have one or two assistants. LFC is one of only two Premier League clubs (along with Arsenal) to install a fully accessible toilet with additional equipment such as a mobile hoist, changing bench (custom-made in club red) and enough space for up to two carers. Located in the Kop, it's been given the gold star by specialist manufacturers Astor-Bannerman (Medical) Ltd.

Katie Price, disabled representative for the Liverpool FC Supporters Committee, calls it "great news – this allows all disabled fans to have an improved matchday experience." Tom Hutchinson, vice-chair of the LDSA, adds: "Hopefully the facility will be a flagship for all football grounds across the country."

For more info please visit **www.changing-places.org**.

SEASON-TICKET HOLDERS

As a Season Ticket Holder there will be times when you cannot make it to a Barclays Premier League home match due to holidays or other commitments. If so, don't let your seat go empty and lose out on the opportunity to receive credit against the cost of your Season Ticket next summer.

Use the online Ticket Exchange service to release your ticket. You can use this service as many times as you want during the season.

For more information regarding the Ticket Exchange please visit: www.liverpoolfc.com/tickets/ticket-exchange.



FIXTURE LIST 2014/2015

AUGUST

17	Southampton (H)	2-1
25	Manchester City (A)	1-3
31	Tottenham Hotspur (A)	3-0

SEPTEMBER

13	Aston Villa (H)	0-1
16	PFC Ludogorets 1945 (H, UCL)	2-1
20	West Ham United (A)	1-3
23	Middlesbrough (H, COC 3)	2-2*
27	Everton (H)	1-1

OCTOBER

1	FC Basel 1893 (A, UCL)	0-1
4	West Bromwich Albion (H)	2-1
19	Queens Park Rangers (A)	3-2
22	Real Madrid (H, UCL)	0-3
25	Hull City (H)	0-0
28	Swansea City (H, COC 4)	2-1

NOVEMBER

1	Newcastle United (A)	0-1
4	Real Madrid (A, UCL)	0-1
8	Chelsea (H)	1-2
23	Crystal Palace (A)	1-3
26	PFC Ludogorets 1945 (A, UCL)	2-2
29	Stoke City (H)	1-0

DECEMBER

2	Leicester City (A)	3-1
6	Sunderland (H, 3pm)	0-0
9	FC Basel 1893 (H, UCL)	1-1
14	Manchester United (A)	0-3
17	Bournemouth (A, COC 5)	3-1
21	Arsenal (H)	2-2
26	Burnley (A, 3pm)	
29	Swansea City (H, 8pm)	

JANUARY

1	Leicester City (H, 3pm)
5	AFC Wimbledon (A, FAC 3, 7.55pm)
10	Sunderland (A, 12.45pm)
17	Aston Villa (A, 3pm)
20	Chelsea (H, COC SF 1, 7.45pm)
24	FA Cup fourth round
27	Chelsea (A, COC SF2, 7.45pm)
31	West Ham United (H, 3pm)

FEBRUARY

7	Everton (A, 5.30pm)
10	Tottenham Hotspur (H, 8pm)
14	FA Cup fifth round
19	Besiktas (H, UEL, R32, 8.05pm)
22	Southampton (A, 4.15pm)
26	Besiktas (A, UEL, R32, 6pm)

MARCH

1	Manchester City (H, 12pm) or Capital One Cup final
4	Burnley (H)
7	FA Cup quarter-finals
12	Europa League round of 16 (1)
14	Swansea City (A)
19	Europa League round of 16 (2)
21	Manchester United (H)

APRIL

4	Arsenal (A)
11	Newcastle United (H)
16	Europa League quarter-finals (1)
18	Hull City (A) / FA Cup semi-finals
23	Europa League quarter-finals (2)
25	West Bromwich Albion (A)

MAY

2	Queens Park Rangers (H)
7	Europa League semi-finals (1)
9	Chelsea (A)
14	Europa League semi-finals (2)
16	Crystal Palace (H)
24	Stoke City (A)
27	Europa League final
30	FA Cup final

* LFC won on penalties

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Working with children and adults to help inspire positive change through sport – follow us on Twitter **@LFCFoundation** to keep up to date with the community team's projects and activities

BOXING CLEVER

'Pricey' makes big impression on young sportspeople at Foundation event

David Price, the Olympic medal-winning boxer and Reds fan, recently hosted a Q&A session with youngsters from Liverpool FC Foundation's Premier League 4 Sport (PL4S) boxing sessions at Anfield.

Convening from different Foundation PL4S boxing sessions across the whole of Merseyside, the youngsters put their questions to the popular heavyweight fighter, who spoke candidly about his career to date and passed on tips for success.

PL4S is an innovative project funded by a joint partnership between Premier League and Sport England. It encourages young people to participate in sports outside school hours by improving the infrastructure and supporting links between schools and clubs.

David said: "It was great to meet so many youngsters who share my passion for boxing. Having an opportunity like this to pass on some of my knowledge and experiences was very rewarding. I hope they all take something from it."

Liverpool FC Foundation currently offers seven sports as part of its PL4S programme: basketball, badminton, boxing, netball, table tennis, volleyball and athletics. Each week it delivers 25 free sessions across Merseyside in local sports and community centres.

David gives advice to the young participants


The boxer with youngsters and the UEFA Champions League trophy

"We'll continue to develop this fantastic project for young people"

More than 80 participants attend the boxing sessions, which are delivered in Broadgreen International School, Alsop High School, Notre Dame Catholic College, North Liverpool Academy and Anfield & North Liverpool Boxing Club.

PL4S is just one part of a wide range of Liverpool FC Foundation programmes inspiring people from all walks of life to make positive change for themselves and their communities.

Andrea Cooper, the head of Liverpool FC Foundation, added: "More than 500 young people benefited in 2014 from this fantastic programme which maximises sporting opportunities and encourages them to be more active. We'll continue to develop it so that we can engage with even more youngsters across Merseyside in the future."

WE ARE FAMILY!

Liverpool central defender brings family to All Saints in Anfield for festive fun

Reds centre-back Mamadou Sakho and his family paid a Christmas visit to All Saints Primary School in Anfield to attend one of their assemblies.

The visit with his wife Majda and daughter Aida included special festive awards followed by a raffle, which included an LFC shirt and football boots signed by Mamadou to raise funds for the Ebola crisis.

Sakho also made a donation to the school's collection which will be sent directly to their partner school near Freetown in Sierra Leone. The Ebola issue is close to Mamadou's heart – he supports families in West Africa through his charity AMSAK. The 24-year-old French international has visited the school several times this year as part of his ambassadorial role with Liverpool FC Foundation. He assists with the On the Ball project, an intensive programme based at the school that aims to improve attendance and punctuality, raise numeracy and literacy skills, increase physical activity levels and increase academic achievement.



Mamadou with daughter Aida and All Saints pupils



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YNWA DOWN UNDER

Ten thousand miles away lies a bastion of LFC support, and Trevor Treharne explores why



The boss in Oz in 2013

As 95,000 people joined in unison to sing *You'll Never Walk Alone* across a stadium swathed in red, you could imagine this was an FA Cup or Champions League final with no ticket allocation for the other team. But such scenes were playing out some 10,000 miles from England and the rest of Europe. Eighteen months ago Australia's Liverpool FC obsession was writ large at the Melbourne Cricket Ground's exhibition game against Melbourne Victory.

Obsession is the apt adjective. Overseas fascination with Liverpool is nothing unique but in Australia it's more than spotting the odd youngster playing football in a Steven Gerrard shirt on your taxi-ride from the airport.

While I was editor of *Australian FourFourTwo* magazine, we arranged the biggest reader survey since the title's inception to plan the coming

"When we put Gerrard on the cover of the magazine it outsold Messi"

year's cover stars and content. In a nation of diverse immigrant background and an A-League structure which had captivated the local population, readers were quizzed on the main team they followed. Unsurprisingly, Melbourne Victory and Sydney FC, from Australia's two most populated cities, were two of the top three. However the no1 spot was reserved for an overseas side, Liverpool FC.

In the month prior to these findings, a rare opportunity to visit Lionel Messi in Spain arose. Something of a budget-buster for a magazine with a niche following in Australia, the interview was a real coup and duly given the green light, with the Barcelona and

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"The LFC passing game was very attractive to young Aussies"

Argentina superstar on the front cover. The following month we ran a generic piece on Steven Gerrard with a stock action image on the cover. A bit of a 'cobble-job', it nonetheless outsold the Messi issue on the news-stand.

It begs the simple question – why? The first and most obvious answer is that immigration-assembled Australia has a disproportionately large slice of Scousers importing a de facto allegiance, one that has snowballed through the decades. While it's true that some Aussie supporters are nationalised Liverpudlians and others were born into such support, this only tells part of the story – after all, immigration from other English cities has been just as prevalent.

The more compelling answer lies in juvenile romanticism. In Australia today, media mogul Rupert Murdoch has flooded his home nation with every kick of an English top-flight football – you can watch all 380 Premier League matches in high-definition clarity. This is a far cry from the 1960s, 70s and 80s when football fans fed upon televised crumbs in a nation mad about cricket, rugby and Aussie Rules.

Andy Morrison, 51 and born in the Sydney suburb of Fairfield, remembers when English football started to be shown on TV, coinciding with a particularly affluent period for LFC. "Obviously the Liverpool teams of the 1970s were very successful, so as an impressionable young soccer fan it was easy to get drawn into supporting them," he says.

Michael Sullivan, 34 and a fan from Queensland, agrees: "Access to highlights on TV in Australia during the period when Liverpool were dominant was definitely the trigger for my support." Wayne Psaila, 42 and founder of the Melbourne Liverpool Supporters Club, adds: "The club's dominance in the 1970s and 80s would no doubt have played its role in winning the hearts and minds of football fans in Australia."

The television show to ignite this fascination was ITV's *The Big Match*, which started in 1968 and ran for 20 years in Australia. Given a slightly underwhelming 10pm Wednesday slot, its appeal came from its monopolised position – in terms of football coverage it was all Australians had.



Skippy himself: Craig Johnston in the 1986 FA Cup final



The skipper acknowledges Melbourne's many fans

With the nation's own football team making its first World Cup appearance in 1974, and participation rates in the sport rocketing, this glimpse into the glamour of European football ensured that Liverpool were the star example of how good the game could be.

"Their style of play was very attractive," says Morrison. "The passing game was easy to aspire to. As I grew up and started playing soccer more seriously I found myself in dressing-rooms with other Aussies who had a soft spot for Liverpool." Stars like Dalglish, Keegan, Souness and Rush caught the imagination of young Aussie fans. It was an impression that would last.

There is more to this story. Ask any Australian for their defining national characteristic and sporting prowess will likely feature. To ask why is to dig deeper into the national psyche. Educated, wealthy and broadly developed, Australia finds itself removed from its Western peers by its geography. Sporting achievement on the global stage lets the rest of the world know that Australia exists, and can compete.

You could argue than rather than simply sports, the national obsession is winning overseas. Australian news reports are filled with discoveries of Aussies claiming victories in various obscure guises. For example, the 2013 Chelsea Flower Show made every major news programme because an Australian team won the best-in-show!



Harry Kewell helped relight the Liverpool touchpaper in Oz

So what is the relevance to Australia's Liverpool Football Club obsession? Enter Craig Johnston. Specifically Johnston's goal at the 1986 FA Cup final – the first time an Australian had scored in an FA Cup final.

"The FA Cup final was the only live English football match shown on television here in Australia," explains Wayne Psaila. "It was a family tradition that my family would stay up to watch the final every year. The 1986 final, Liverpool v Everton, what a game that was. I fondly remember seeing a fellow Aussie with a curly mop of hair, Craig Johnston, score a great goal. I was hooked. I've met many supporters who say that goal against Everton was the day they first fell in love with the club."

Michael Sullivan adds: "Australians are very patriotic and Johnston's success at Liverpool certainly had any impact on Liverpool's following over here."

Morrison "was already hooked but I was still proud to see an Aussie in the red shirt scoring in an FA Cup final. At the time I was a bit hard on him for not making himself available for the national team. But on reflection, and a greater understanding of where football in this country was at that particular stage, I understand it was more important for his career to concentrate on Liverpool."

Morrison raises a good point. Johnston is an Australian legend for what he achieved at Liverpool.

"I was proud to see an Aussie in a red shirt score in the final"

However, the South African-born midfielder never actually played for Australia: he qualified by being raised in the country but rejected approaches to play in the green-and-gold, famously stating that playing for Australia would be like "surfing for England."

Harry Kewell reignited the Johnston effect in the 2000s. Psaila explains: "Among our younger supporters in Australia, seeing Kewell representing the club would have made Liverpool attractive for them to adopt as their own. It's quite incredible to think that despite Australia's relatively modest football history, there have been two players from this country who have featured in European Cup-winning teams for Liverpool."

The tentativeness of Johnston's link to Australia and Kewell's injury-plagued spell at Anfield are minor narrative detractions – Craig and Harry were representing Australia in the eyes of their countrymen. A national identity based on global sporting prowess was being played out in the red of Liverpool, and Australians have not been able to let it go since.

The LFC obsession in Australia is likely to endure. Recent decades may have witnessed Manchester United title-hauls then the emergence of Chelsea and Manchester City, but Australia has stayed a steadfast shade of Mersey red. Even La Liga boasting two all-time greats in Ronaldo and Messi has barely turned the heads of 'Red Australia'. Talk of the club returning in 2015 has sparked the kind of excitable mutterings normally reserved for teen-pop fans. The fact is, Liverpool FC could enjoy every pre-season in front of nearly 100,000 fans singing YNWA on the Kop-obsessed shores Down Under.

2013 AND ALL THAT



From the Premier of Victoria State to rank-and-file fans in their tens of thousands, the city of Melbourne gave LFC a welcome it would never forget on the club's 2013 tour – the first to visit Australia.

The Reds took on Hyundai A-League side Melbourne Victory on Wednesday 24 July at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground, with Football Federation Australia head David Gallop calling it a "marquee occasion to excite football fans across Australia." Victoria State Premier Denis Napthine told LFCTV: "Liverpool are one of the most well-known football clubs in the world and we've been absolutely thrilled to have them here. When I was growing up and watching the telly, they were my favourite team."

Staff from the Liverpool FC Foundation carried out work in the community, with Reds players overwhelmed by a reception at Melbourne's Federation Square then attending a football clinic for youngsters organised by the Foundation and the city.

An official LFC Facebook page was also created for Australian fans to complement the earlier launch of an official LFC Australia and New Zealand Twitter account – @LFCANZ.


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LFC family Instagram



5 Dec
liverpoolfc
Our beloved home ground in 1903 #LFC #Anfield #FlashbackFriday

4 Dec
liverpoolfc
Construction will add 8,500 seats to the Main Stand #LFC



4 Dec
31sterling
New trim ✂✂



30 Nov
amplfc18 (moreno)
With my nice dog Ali #bullterrier #puppy #liverpool #goodday



30 Nov
jesanchez3 (Enrique)
What a professional amazing hahahaha @leivalucas



29 Nov
stevengerrard
All about the 3pts come on the lads...



29 Nov
liverpoolfc
Inside the #LFC dressing room ahead of game v Stoke City



20 Nov
stevengerrard
Great to be back at the academy with the U8s. Standard was quality



15 Nov
dowie09
Just got an Alder Hey children's hospital alphabet scarf #Scarfie



13 Oct
dstudge
Special... Fave animal by a mile



11 Oct
dejanlovren06
Saturday night #HomeAlone #whatalife



5 Oct
leivalucas
My dog Sunny Boy

David PRICE

Looking forward to seeing Mourinho's men back at Anfield for a cup semi-final

Liverpool and Chelsea under Jose Mourinho have plenty of previous when it comes to cup semi-finals. We will start 2015 with another installment in that particular story and it is something for every Liverpool fan to look forward to.

Some supporters would have preferred to meet Totenham or Sheffield United in the last four of the Capital One Cup. But if you want to win a trophy you are going to have to beat the best teams along the way and I'm sure Chelsea won't relish the prospect of coming back to Anfield.

The League Cup is a trophy we've made our own over the years. No one has won it more than Liverpool and it is a competition we always take seriously. Mourinho is a proud man with a big ego and he would love to win here in such an important game. He will probably play down the League Cup, but I'm certain he will have one eye on trying to create the precedent of winning the quadruple.

From Liverpool's point-of-view, however, other teams have shown that Chelsea aren't invincible during the last few weeks, so hopefully that can give the team belief and we can get about them and take a lead to Stamford Bridge for the second leg.

It would be great for Brendan Rodgers and his team to get to Wembley. But while we all want to win trophies and see some success, for me the most important thing is getting back in the Champions League. I'd take that over winning a trophy – unless it was the Europa League which would kill two birds with the same stone.

The football we played before Christmas in the games against Bournemouth and Arsenal gave me hope that we'd turned a corner and hopefully this will prove to be a season of two halves. One of the great things about last year was how enjoyable the games were to watch. It was refreshing to see and in my memory I hadn't seen a team play such an attacking brand of football.

"To win trophies you have to beat the best teams"



Liverpool and Chelsea have cup previous

The movement and flow to our football returned in those two games and with Daniel Sturridge hopefully coming back into the picture in January, things are looking up.

The system Brendan played in those games allowed creative players like Raheem Sterling, Philippe Coutinho, Adam Lallana and Lazar Markovic to get on the ball and the prospect of seeing them operating behind Sturridge is an exciting one.

On a personal note I will be back in the ring on 21 February this year. I had to pull out of my scheduled bout last month with a minor bicep injury which was frustrating because I haven't fought since June. But I will be on the undercard for the re-match between Paul Smith and Arthur Abraham in Berlin.

Paul is a good mate of mine so hopefully he can land that WBO world super middleweight title and I can get a good win under my belt. That would set things up nicely for what will hopefully be a big year for me in 2015.

Follow David on Twitter @DavidPrice_1


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